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PETER A. B. C. H.

THE NEW CATHEDRAL

IN THE CATHEDRAL

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BY  
THOMAS CAMPBELL, ESQ.

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## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XIX.

I HAVE mentioned that Petrarch did not revisit Italy, in 1347, without having received the most pressing invitations from several of the lords of that country, who all offered him an honourable settlement in their respective states. Accordingly, he paid several visits to them, and, among the rest, to Ludovico, the lord of Padua.

Ludovico di Gonzagua, now bent under four-score years, had associated his three sons in the government with himself, or, rather, had given it up to them. He assigned them employments suited to their genius. Guido, the eldest, liberal, magnificent, and a lover of letters, was charged with all that concerns the internal government of the city, and its negotiations with strangers. Filippino, active and fond of war, had the command of

the army. He had attended the King of Hungary in a late expedition to Naples, in which the Hungarian sovereign wished to avenge the death of his brother Andrew, and Filippo had but recently returned home. Feltrino, the youngest of the Gonzagua brothers, loved the arts, and to him was assigned the direction of the buildings and fortifications, and the repair of the highways. These three brothers shewed by their conduct how much may be accomplished in a small state by skill and unanimity.

In passing from Parma to Verona, Petrarch visited Mantua. He there went to see the little village of Pietola, famous, whether deservedly or not, as the birthplace of Virgil. At this spot he wrote an address in Latin verse to the Mantuan bard. This composition would not of itself have materially contributed to Petrarch's reputation, but it is curiously characteristic, and, I think, worthy of being given in his biography. He says to Virgil, "Great poet, the honour of Rome and the hope of the Latin Muses, tell me where you are at present. In what circle of Avernus are you included? Ought you not rather to be on Parnassus with Apollo and the nine sisters, who ravish you with their concerts? Perhaps you walk in the woods, or in the Elysian fields with Homer, or

with Orpheus and the other poets of the first rank, excepting Lucan, Lucretius, and all those who have committed suicide. I wish to learn with whom you associate, and pass your life ; how far your dreams differ from the truth ; and what is that gate of ivory through which you make your *Æneas* pass in departing from the infernal regions. I would willingly believe that you inhabit that region of heaven which is destined for happy souls, since the king of the world has opened the gates of Tartarus with his crucified hands, and wrested from hell its spoils. If any shade has the happiness to arrive, you shall learn from me what is the lot of the places that were dear to you, and the fate of your works. Mantua, which glorifies herself in having reared you in her bosom, is harassed by neighbouring troubles ; and, defended by princes full of valour, she refuses to obey the yoke of a stranger, or to be governed but by her own race. It is at Mantua that I write the verses which I address to you. I there explore with eagerness the rocks to which you sometimes retired, the meadows where you walked on the banks of the Mincio, the trees of which you sought the shade, the woods that afforded you a refuge from the heat, the turf over which you trod in order to

seat yourself by some fountain. All these objects make me retrace your image.

“The city of Naples, though it has the honour of possessing your ashes, is otherwise unfortunate. It has groaned under oppression ever since it was deprived of its great King Robert. A single day ravished from it the prosperity of many years. This kingdom is in a dangerous and tottering state; an innocent people is punished for the crimes of a few miscreants.

“Ask me not what is the destiny of Rome, your mother; alas! it were better that you were ignorant of it. Rather learn the success of your inspired productions. Your aged Tityrus charms the whole world by the sweet sounds of his reed. Nothing is more beautiful than the fields that have been cultivated according to the lessons which you give in your Georgics. Your *Æneas* is the favourite of the world — every one loves him and sings his praises—that *Æneas*, who, when sentenced by your lips, was near being burnt a second time, when the compassion of Augustus saved him from the flames. We thank this prince for not having deferred to your last wishes. Adieu! you shall be for ever dear to me. Salute in my name Homer and Hesiod.”

If this letter were the production of a modern, we should only laugh at it ; but, coming from Petrarch, and demanding allowance for the age and circumstances in which he lived, it has an amusing interest.

In order to understand what Petrarch says in the above letter about Mantua, it is necessary to know that that city is situated between Verona, Modena, and the states of Milan, that the lords of each of these three cities found Mantua a place which strongly invited them to the possession of it, and had made several but unsuccessful efforts to render themselves masters of it. Mastino de la Scala could never forgive the Gonzaguas for having contributed to deprive him of the city of Parma. Luchino Visconti swore the destruction of the same family when he learned what had passed between his wife, Isabella di Fiesca, and Ugolino, the son of Guido Gonzagua, in that famous journey to Venice which occasioned so much scandal ; and, in fact, he sent against them an army, which took possession of several places belonging to them, in May 1348. The lords of Modena and Verona took advantage of this occasion to attack the beleaguered Gonzaguas. A league so formidable seemed ready to crush them at once,

but it ended in nothing. The courage and the union of the brother princes delivered them from jeopardy. The troops of Luchino Visconti were beaten, and John Visconti, his successor, made peace with the Gonzaguas. The lords of Verona and Modena, when abandoned by Milan, soon came to terms of accommodation.

Guido, the father of Ugolino Gonzagua, had a cultivated mind and was fond of reading. This was a bond of amity between him and our poet. He asked Petrarch one day for a foreign book in the vulgar tongue. His friend sent him a book, which is not named, indeed, but which evidently must have been the *Romaunt of the Rose*, together with some Latin verses. This romaunt, begun by Guillaume de Lorris and finished by Jean de Meun, had appeared lately in France, and made a great noise. Petrarch's criticism on it is severe, but not discreditable to his taste. "I send you," he says, "a production which France praises to the skies, and puts in comparison with the best things that have ever been written. It proves to me how much Italy surpasses in eloquence all other nations excepting Greece, if we may believe public rumour, though Cicero does not admit this exception.

"A Frenchman in this poem relates his dreams :



his object is to make known the power of love, the force of jealousy, the tricks of old, and the stratagems of young lovers. He brings to light the woes that love entails, the obstacles which it finds in its pursuit, the trouble and repose, the grief and the joy—its groans and its smiles. He shows that its pleasures are rare, and always inundated with tears. What field for poetry can be more vast or fertile! The author, however, does nothing but dream in relating his dreams. We never take him for a man who is awake. How differently has Virgil managed the pathos of love in his episode of Dido! The poet of Verona (Catullus), he of Umbria (Horace), and he of Salmone, so tender and so fertile, how much better do they treat this passion, without speaking of other ancient authors, as well as some moderns, whom our country has produced. However, I hope that for the present you will not disdain what I send you. You asked me for a foreign book in the vulgar tongue. I could send you nothing better, at least, unless you believe that all France, and even Paris, its capital, is in an error."

From Mantua Petrarch went to Verona, and thence to Padua, where James Carrara, in order to fix him near himself, had obtained for him a

Paduan canonicate. In the course of the same year he was elected archdeacon of Parma. He had not reached that dignity at an earlier period, though De Sade says so by mistake.

There is evidence that he was at Mantua in the beginning of February, 1350 ; and, at that period, he had the pleasure of welcoming the arrival of Cardinal Guy of Boulogne, legate of the holy see, who came from Hungary after a papal mission to that kingdom. Petrarch was much attached to him. His legation to Hungary had for its object to appease the troubles of Naples, occasioned by the tragic death of King Andrew.

Guy of Boulogne, by the Italians called Guido di Montfort, was the son of Robert VII., Count of Auvergne and of Boulogne sur Mer, and of Mary of Flanders. To his high birth he joined spirit and talents, and finished his studies at Paris with rapidity and success. He was only twenty years of age when, in 1340, the pope bestowed upon him the archbishopric of Lyons. Two years afterwards, Clement VI. made him a cardinal at the instance of Philip of Valois. In spite of his youth, his holiness confided to him the most important affairs, and, among these, the delicate and difficult task of negotiating with the Hungarians.

The king of Hungary had marched with an army to Naples, vowing to revenge his brother's death, and to seize the Neapolitan kingdom, lawlessly pretending that it belonged to him. The Hungarians, for the present, prevailed, and Queen Giovanna fled to Provence from their fury. The princes of the blood came to offer the Hungarian monarch their submission; but he ordered one of them to be strangled, and, putting the rest in irons, he sent them into Hungary.

After this expedition, he sent ambassadors to the pope to justify his conduct, to solicit the investiture of the kingdom of Naples, and to obtain the punishment of Queen Giovanna. Soon afterwards, the plague obliged him to quit Naples, and to return to his native country.

The negotiation of this affair was very delicate: Guy de Boulogne had to conciliate the King of Hungary, to propose peace between him and the Queen of Naples, to solicit the freedom of the princes of the blood, and to demand a dismissal of the proceedings against Giovanna for the crime of which she was accused. The cardinal legate, with all his address, could not for a long time obtain more than a truce. He came to Padua, where he was received with the highest honours. James of

Carrara gave up to him his palace, and defrayed the expences of his suite, consisting of three hundred persons. He stopped for several days in that city, in order to superintend the removal of the body of St. Anthony, which was dug out of his tomb, to a church that had been built for him.

The cardinal and several eminent persons who attended him had frequent conversations with our poet, in which they described to him the state of Germany and the situation of the emperor. We shall very soon see how deep an interest Petrarch took in these affairs, of which, however, it will be necessary to resume a general sketch.

The prince, commonly called Charles of Luxemburg, had been elected king of the Romans, through the influence of the pope, to whom he was devoted. His election as emperor, however, was contested by the greater part of the Germans. They acknowledged as their emperor, Lewis of Bavaria, until his death, which took place in 1347. The death of Lewis, says Muratori, was the life of Charles.

Those German electors who had not consented to the choice of Charles at first offered the imperial crown to Edward III. of England, who declined it; then to the Margrave of Misnia, who

renounced his right, in favour of Charles, for ten thousand marks of silver. A third offer had been made to Gunther, Count of Schwarzburg, in Thuringia; so that when the Cardinal of Boulogne arrived in Germany, in 1349, he found Charles in possession of the empire. He had established his court at Prague, the capital of his kingdom of Bohemia; and thither the Cardinal Legate went to treat with him on business entrusted to him by the pope.

Clement VI., who had reason to be satisfied with the submissiveness of this prince, wished to attract him into Italy. He there hoped to oppose him to the Visconti, who had put themselves at the head of the Ghibelline party, and gave much annoyance to the Guelphs. His holiness strongly solicited him to come; but Charles's situation would not permit him for the present to undertake such an expedition. There were still some troubles in Germany that remained to be appeased; besides, the prince's purse was exhausted by the largesses which he had paid for his election. The new tolls and taxes which he had imposed yielded him but a scanty revenue, and his poverty was extreme. At his departure from Worms, in Germany, he was arrested for debt by the butcher

who had furnished meat for his household during his residence in that city. The people openly took part with the butcher; and Charles, having a suite that was too small to employ force, had recourse to negociation. But the man of the cleaver insisted on being paid, and the Bishop of Worms was obliged to discharge the bill for his imperial majesty.

It must be owned that a prince in such circumstances could hardly be expected to set out for the subjugation of Italy. Petrarch, however, took a romantic view of the emperor's duties, and thought that the restoration of the Roman empire was within Charles's grasp. Our poet never lost sight of his favourite chimera, namely, the re-establishment of Rome in her ancient dominion. It was what he called one of his principles, that Rome had a right to govern the world. Wild as this vision was, he had seen Rienzo attempt its realization; and, if the Tribune had been more prudent, there is no saying how nearly he might have approached to the achievement of so marvellous an issue. But Rienzo was now fallen irrecoverably. We shall have something to say very soon about his fate after his fall.

Petrarch, turning his views to a different quarter

for the fulfilment of his chimera, looked with enthusiasm to the Emperor Charles; and it must be owned that the condition of Italy, under a grinding aristocracy, was at that time propitious to Charles, if he had possessed more money and more ambition.

Charles, as Emperor, was the head of the Ghibellines, and his connexion with the pope tended to conciliate the Guelphic party. The principal states of Italy groaned under oppressive tyrants, and desired a supreme head to whom they might appeal. The city of Rome, replunged into all the horrors of anarchy, from which Rienzo had relieved her for a moment, saw that she had no other resource than the return of her two chiefs, the pope and the emperor, and desired that they should come and establish their abode in the capital of the world. Florence itself, a republic so jealous of its liberty, solicited Charles's entry into Italy, wishing to oppose him to the Visconti, lords of Milan, whose power it dreaded.

Petrarch now desired as ardently to see the emperor in Italy, as ever he had sighed for the success of Rienzo. He was at first restrained from writing to Charles by the consciousness of having no personal acquaintance with him, and

by a general dread of mixing himself up with political affairs at a time when he had no public character. But his zeal at last broke silence. The motives of his conduct on this occasion are stated in a letter which he addressed some time afterwards to Pope Urban V.

Meanwhile Petrarch wrote to the emperor a long letter from Padua, a few days after the departure of the cardinal. "I am agitated," he says, "in sending this epistle, when I think from whom it comes, and to whom it is addressed. Placed as I am, in obscurity, I am dazzled by the splendour of your name; but love has banished fear: this letter will at least make known to you my fidelity, and my zeal. Read it, I conjure you! You will not find in it the insipid adulation, which is the plague of monarchs. Flattery is an art unknown to me. I have to offer you only complaints and regrets. You have forgotten us. I say more—you have forgotten yourself in neglecting Italy. We had high hopes that Heaven had sent you to restore us our liberty; but it seems that you refuse this mission, and, whilst the time should be spent in acting, you lose it in deliberating.

"You see, Cæsar, with what confidence an obscure man addresses you, a man who has not even



the advantage of being known to you. But, far from being offended with the liberty I take, you ought rather to thank your own character, which inspires me with such confidence. To return to my subject—wherefore do you lose time in consultation? To all appearance, you are sure of the future, if you will avail yourself of the present. You cannot be ignorant that the success of great affairs often hangs upon an instant, and that a day has been frequently sufficient to consummate what it required ages to undo. Believe me, your glory and the safety of the commonwealth, your own interests, as well as our's, require that there be no delay. You are still young, but time is flying; and old age will come and take you by surprise when you are least expecting it. Are you afraid of too soon commencing an enterprize for which a long life would scarcely suffice?

“The Roman empire, shaken by a thousand storms, and as often deceived by fallacious calms, places at last its whole hopes in you. It recovers a little breath even under the shelter of your name; but hope alone will not support it. In proportion as you know the grandeur of the undertaking, consummate it the sooner. Let not the love of your

Transalpine dominions detain you longer. In beholding Germany, think of Italy. If the one has given you birth, the other has given you greatness. If you are king of the one, you are king and emperor of the other. Let me say, without meaning offence to other nations, that here is the head of your monarchy. Every where else you will find only its members. What a glorious project to unite those members to their head!

“I am aware that you dislike all innovation; but what I propose would be no innovation on your part. Italy is as well known to you as Germany. Brought hither in your youth by your illustrious sire, he made you acquainted with our cities and our manners, and taught you here the first lessons of war. In the bloom of your youth, you have obtained great victories. Can you fear at present to enter a country where you have triumphed since your childhood?

“By the singular favour of Heaven we have regained the ancient right of being governed by a prince of our own nation.\* Let Germany say what she will, Italy is veritably your country \* \*

\* Petrarch's words are: “civi servare suo;” but he takes the liberty of considering Charles as — adoptively — Italian, though that prince was born at Prague.

\* \* \* Come with haste to restore peace to Italy. Behold Rome, once the empress of the world, now pale, with scattered locks and torn garments, at your feet, imploring your presence and support !” Then follows a dissertation on the history and heroes of Rome, which might be wearisome if transcribed to a modern reader. But the epistle, upon the whole, is manly and eloquent.

A few days after despatching his letter to the emperor, Petrarch made a journey to Verona to see his friends. There he wrote to Socrates. In this letter, after enumerating the few friends whom the plague had spared, he confesses that he could not flatter himself with the hope of being able to join them in Provence. He therefore invokes them to come to Italy, and to settle either at Parma or at Padua, or any other place that would suit them. His remaining friends, here enumerated, were only Barbato of Sulmona, Francesco Rinucci, John Boccaccio, Lælius, Guido Settimo, and Socrates.

Marco Barbato, of Sulmona, had been a literary favourite of Robert I., king of Naples, at whose court he obtained the post of chancellor. King Robert made Barbato acquainted with Petrarch in 1341. Our poet conceived a great regard for him, and thought well of his poetic talents. After the death

of Robert, Barbato withdrew from the court, but returned when Naples was governed by Siniscalco Acciajuoli, by whom he was effectively protected. When Petrarch wrote to him, Barbato was settled with his wife at Sulmona, and could not leave her.

Francesco di Nello, to whom Petrarch was singularly attached, and to whom he gave the name of Simonides, was prior of the church of the holy apostles at Florence, where his father had borne the office of Gonfalionere. *He* also found it impossible to join our poet. Lælius was at Rome, and occupied with the business of the republic, whilst Guido Settimo was still fixed at the court of Avignon, where he expected to make his fortune.

The illustrious John Boccaccio was a Florentine, like Francesco di Nello, and so much attached to his native place that nothing could tempt him to leave it. The very name of that most natural and delightful writer, Boccaccio, touches the mind with a deep interest in his and Petrarch's mutual friendship. It is satisfactory, to be sure, to find that their friendship was sincere and mutual. The vile little tradition that they were jealous of each other can be proved, to a moral certainty, to be false. Emulation is natural to genius, but not envy.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XX.

Birth of Boccaccio—His Father puts him to School at Florence—Places him with a Merchant—Wishes him to study the Canon Law in Paris—Changes his Views—Resolves to make him a Merchant, and sends him to Naples—Literary Men with whom Giovanni became acquainted there—His veneration for Dante—Impression made on him by the honours paid to Petrarch—Person of Boccaccio—He falls in love with Maria, natural daughter of Robert, King of Naples—Composes his *Filicopo*—His *Teseide*—He introduces the Metre adopted by Ariosto and Tasso—He returns to Florence at the command of his Father—Despair of his Mistress—His *Amorosa Visione*—His *Fiammetta*—He returns to Naples—Goes back to Florence—Is commissioned to convey to Petrarch the Decree of the Florentines restoring to him his Civic Rights and Patrimony—Contracts a personal friendship with him—Produces his *Decamerone*—His zeal in collecting the Ancient Classics—Deplorable state of a Monastic Library—Boccaccio writes a *Life of Dante*—Transcribes his Works as a Present to Petrarch—Is sent as Ambassador to the Margrave of Brandenburg—Publishes his *Decamerone*—Subject of the Work—Vindica-

tion of it from the charge of Immorality—Boccaccio's Letter to Petrarch, reproaching him for his Intimacy with the Visconti — His Corbaccio — Influenced by a Fanatical Monk, he repents of his Writings — Is appointed to a Professorship instituted for the Explanation of Dante—His Death.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE famous Giovanni Boccaccio was born in 1313, of a family respectable as merchants, who, having originally belonged to Certaldo, in the Val d'Elsa, some twenty miles from Florence, came and settled in that city. His father was called Boccaccio di Chellino. Although our great novelist always entitles himself da Certaldo, he was not born in that place; but he used its name to record it as the cradle of his family.

Boccaccio di Chellino was a frequent traveller, probably on account of his mercantile pursuits. He lived a considerable time, during his youth, at Paris; where, being of an amorous disposition, like his son, he fell in love with a young lady of the French capital, and, it would appear, without marrying her, made her the mother of Giovanni. It is probable that she did not long survive the

birth of her son, as he has left in his writings no memorial of his recollecting her. The place of his birth can, therefore, only be conjectured. Wherever it was, his father removed him at a very early age to Florence, which he always regarded as his own country, though not with more strict justice than Petrarch called himself a Florentine, for the latter was forty-six years old before his countrymen recognized his right of citizenship. Whilst he was still a mere child, and before he knew of how many feet a verse should consist, he tells us himself that he composed verses, and that, indifferent as they were, they obtained for him the name of the young poet.

His father placed him in Florence at the school of Giovanni da Strada, a teacher of reputation, but from economy withdrew him from that seminary before he had learned the elements of Latin, and sent him to a teacher of arithmetic, in order to fit him for merchandize. He soon afterwards consigned him to a merchant, that he might acquire the noble art of traffic; but Boccaccio was so dull in learning it, that his master expressed unfeigned wonder how his apprentice could have ever had the character of a clever lad; and with this



master he might be said to have lost six years of his life, unless we take into account some knowledge of the world, which he must have picked up by travelling about with him. It is probable that the merchant left him at Paris.

As there was now no hope of his becoming an expert man of trade, his father enjoined him to study the canon law; and his biographer, Baldelli, conjectures that his law preceptor was Father Dionisio Roberti Toscano, professor of theology in the university of Paris, and not Cina da Pistoia, as many have asserted, on grounds which Muzzuchelli has shown to be false. Boccaccio began to apply himself to canon law, if the little attention which he ever paid to the subject deserves the name of application, in 1329, at which time, Baldelli, in his *Sommario Chronologica* of Boccaccio's life, pronounces it indubitable that he was in Paris. Philip Villani states that, before he fixed himself at Naples, where he settled in 1333, he travelled to and fro. But in this interval, it appears, from the testimonies of several trustworthy biographers, from his acquaintance with French romances, displayed in his *Fiammetta*, from his knowledge of French manners, from his use of French plots and

idioms in his diction, and from other circumstances, that he must have been a considerable time at Paris. Wherever it was that he ought to have studied canon law, he certainly studied it negligently, if at all, and thus might be said to have lost a few more years of his life.

It is true that, under the tuition of the canonist, he must be supposed to have acquired his Latin, having necessarily forgot the little he had learned in his childhood from Giovanni da Strada. But this was not enough for his father, who found that he was utterly neglecting his juridical studies; and, having vainly tried to make him a canonist, he resolved to make him a merchant again. He therefore ordered him to fix himself at Naples.

When Boccaccio arrived at that capital, it was the residence of Robert I., who was aged and austere, but had a splendid and luxurious court, adorned by many eminent literary characters; for though his majesty was so obtuse himself as to despise Virgil and poetry in general, till Petrarch couched his blindness, he was, nevertheless, a patron of learned men, and had given them important offices. Among these was Giovanni Barrilli, who was a lover of learning and poetry; Barbato of

Sulmona, the king's chancellor; Dionisio Roberti, who had been transferred from the university to the bishopric of Monopoli; the Calabrian Barlaamo, famous for his Greek; Paulo Perugino, a praiseworthy man of letters, and the royal librarian, who made a copious collection of historical and poetical antiquities. With these illustrious men Boccaccio formed a personal acquaintance, and drew delight and profit from their conversation. His being able to preserve an intimacy with them, shows that his own conversation could not have been common-place, and that he had not, strictly speaking, misspent his youthful years, desultory as his life and education had been.

From this period Boccaccio applied himself to the improvement of his mind with opportunities which had been before denied to him. He now acquired the first rudiments of Greek, though under what master is not exactly known, and he learned a little astronomy, or, more properly speaking, astrology, probably from Andalone del Nero. As the city was favourable to the fostering of his intellect, so the surrounding country was calculated to awaken the enthusiasm of his fancy, every corner of that blessed region having been described by

some inspired poet, and the whole being strewed with the remains of monuments of Grecian culture and Roman grandeur. One day, whilst wandering for amusement, he came to the tomb of Virgil. The fame of the mighty bard entranced his thoughts—a sad reflection for a moment darkened them; namely, that he, whose soul thirsted only for poetic glory, should be doomed against his nature to toil in trade; but he concluded his meditations by a resolution from that day to abandon merchandize.

Among the favourites of his imagination, Dante had been his idol even from his childhood, and in his “Amorous Vision” he entitles him “his master,” an expression which his biographers have interpreted differently. Tiraboschi thinks that Dante could not have possibly been the instructor of Boccaccio, during the childhood of the latter. Baldelli, unromantic as he generally is, says that no historical fact seems to him clearer than that Boccaccio was actually introduced to Dante in his childhood, and received from him encouragement to cultivate his poetic vein, and also that Dante gave him such instructions in poetry as were compatible with his early age.

Dante died in 1321, when Boccaccio was eight years old. "Then what contradiction," says Baldelli, "is there in what Petrarch positively expresses to Boccaccio, in one of his epistles, when he repeats the motives which the latter had to be the encomiast of Dante, and says, '*Inseris nominatim hanc hujus officii tui excusationem, quod ille, tibi adolescentulo, primus studiorum dux, prima fax fuerit.*' We must infer, therefore, that at seven years old, an age when Boccaccio was already called a poet, his father brought him to Ravenna, and that Dante, struck with admiration of his promising poetical talents, gave him personal encouragement and instruction." So says Baldelli.

That the mighty Dante should have been smitten with admiration by the rhapsodies of a child seven years old, and of a child who, even in his manhood, never became a great poet, is a supposition that speaks for itself, and by its absurdity confirms Tiraboschi's opinion. Baldelli is an honest, industrious, and, as to matter of fact, a useful writer. I once imagined that such men as he were exempted by nature from illusions of the imagination; and generally they are so: but this is an exception to the rule. Every expression that is

used, either by Petrarch or Boccaccio, respecting the latter being instructed by Dante, must be taken to mean only figuratively that the genius of the great novelist was cherished by the perusal of Dante's writings.

Boccaccio had not been long in Naples, when he acquired a new acquaintance by the arrival of Niccola Acciajuoli, who came thither, at first, with a view to engage in trade, but who, by entering the service of the Princess of Taranto, a near relation of King Robert of Naples, obtained nobility, estates, and the tutorship of her son, from the partiality of his patroness. In 1341, Petrarch was crowned at the Capitol of Rome, after having spent several days at Naples. Deep was the impression made on the young novelist's mind by the honours that were paid to Petrarch. He cherished from that time forward a sort of idolatry for the bard of Vaucluse, whom he used to denominate his master. Boccaccio was ambitious to attain literary honours. But he felt emulation, and not envy. Emulation exalts its object, envy would pull it down.

In his youth, Boccaccio was handsome : his person was large and well built, and his countenance was prepossessing. His nose was well formed, his

eyes bright, and his lips and chin looked peculiarly handsome when he smiled. He was jocund, eloquent, affable, and whatever he said came from him with an amiable urbanity. With an exterior and manners so attractive, it is little wonderful that he was successful in love—and to love he was ardently prone until his later years.

In the year 1341, being twenty-eight years old on the preceding sabbath, (Baldelli, p. 22) he repaired to the church of St. Lorenzo, at Naples. There, whilst he was listening to the chant and psalmody that opened the ear, as it were, to the joys of Heaven, his eyes were fixed upon a young lady in a black mantle, whose beauty brought back his cogitations to this world, and he was seized with the most violent passion for her. This beauty was descended, by her grandfather's side, from the house of Aquino. Her mother was a woman of high birth, who lived in the royal palace, and Robert having become enamoured of her, after a stolen connection, believed himself the father of this girl. She remained an orphan in her juvenile years, and her parentage was not owned, the king being desirous to preserve the mother's honour. But he ordered that Maria, for so she was called, should

receive an elegant education, and, when she was marriageable, he united her to a young man worthy of her birth. She was already married when our novelist first met her—but she proved kinder than Laura.

Boccaccio, though he could never master the mysteries either of law or merchandize, was too good an adept at intrigue not to make his way to Maria, to ingratiate himself with her husband and relatives, and finally to lay siege to her heart. He succeeded, and thought his triumph the most glorious ever won by mortal. And she was indeed a rich prize for the voluptuary—young, exquisitely beautiful, elegant in dance and song, accomplished, clever, and kind-hearted.

The very frailty of his mistress, however, to which he owed his happiness, obliged him to be under some reserve in acquainting the world with his felicity, and to disguise his Maria under the name of Fiammetta. In the same year he commenced the composition of his *Filocolo*. He relates, in the introduction to this work, that, after having seen Maria for the first time, several days afterwards, he met with her opposite to the monastery of Santo Spirito, where she requested him to



write this work. It is a story, in the true style of the Troubadours, of two lovers, who are mutually faithful through dangers and threats of death, and who, at last, are happily united. Filocopo cannot be called a finished composition, but betrays a juvenile and inexperienced pen. It is full of pagan mythology, prolix in its main story, and wearisome in its episodes. The action of the story begins at Rome; but at what time, it is difficult to divine. Heathen and Christian mythology are mixed. The pope is the vicar of the goddess Juno—Lælius, the friend of Scipio, goes on a holy pilgrimage into Iberia—the heathen god, Acheron, figures as a pagan knight, throwing himself at the feet of Felix, a Mahomedan king. The Filocopo was, however, among the earliest prose productions of the great novelist, and the beginning of his career in prose forms an era in the history of Italian literature.

He was not to be divorced from poetry by his prose compositions, but in the same year published his *Teseide*. The legislator of Athens, the slayer of the Minotaur, the conqueror of the Centaurs, the invincible Theseus, was the hero of this epic poem. He had been the subject of a great production of classical antiquity; but this was un-

known to Boccaccio, who learned all that he knew about Theseus from Ovid and Justin. This epic, though it was admired in Italy down to the age of Bojardo and Pulci, is at this day read only by a few Italians who are curious in the antiquities of their native poetry. It has the merit, however, of having opened the noble career of epic romantic poetry, which distinguishes Italian literature above that of all other modern nations. The author's creative genius, moreover, corrected and ameliorated the Sicilian octave measure, which had hitherto included only two rhymes, to which he added a third. He thus introduced the elegant metre with which Ariosto and Tasso enchanted the world.

Boccaccio's happiness with his Fiammetta was neither lasting nor undisturbed by the lady's groundless jealousy, even when he had soothed her to reconciliation by a most humble epistle, which accompanied his Teseide. Their love was doomed to suffer the pangs of parting. Boccaccio's father, now aged and bereaved of his other children, recalled Giovanni to Florence. Extreme was Fiammetta's anguish when he announced to her that, in obedience to filial duty, he should depart; nor

could she be consoled even by his sworn promise of a speedy return. Her sufferings were aggravated by the report of a traveller, as false as it was cruel, that her lover was married. She attempted suicide, and was narrowly prevented from destroying herself by the precautions of an affectionate nurse.

Florence at that time groaned under the tyranny of the Duke of Athens, who had been sent by the King of Naples to the Florentines, under colour of protecting their liberty. The abuse of his power caused him the loss of it. He was chased out of the city, and the struggle between the people and the nobility commenced anew. The popular side prevailed; but without bettering the state of things. It does not seem as if Boccaccio took any part in these troubles. The recollection of Fiammetta, and the composition of several works, in which he consecrated her memory, kept him out of the way of civil discord. Among these compositions was his *Ameto*. This work, which is a mixture of prose and verse, is a pleasing romance: the germ of its subject was drawn from Theocritus, a subject which he liked so much that he revived it, with fresh touches, in his story of Cimone. Every reader

of Dryden's *Fables* will recollect our English poet's imitation of it, through the medium of Chaucer.

In 1343, he wrote his *Amorosa Visione*. In this versified vision the poet is conducted into a temple by a woman, whom he at first believes to be Wisdom; but the temple is divided into five parts; in one of them he witnesses the triumph of Wisdom, in another that of Glory, in a third that of Riches, and, in the two others, the respective triumphs of Love and of Fortune. All these divinities are seated on thrones, and surrounded by personages famous in history for the favours received from one or other of those enthroned powers. It is written in *terza rima*; and, with an eccentricity which has no example but in the Provençal poets, the entire poem forms an acrostic. By taking the first letter of the first line of every tercet, from the beginning to the end of the work, you can put together two sonnets and a canzone, in very regular verse. The name of Madama Maria is quite entire, as also that of the poet, such as he always signed it, Giovanni di Boccaccio da Certaldo. It is a false tradition that he borrowed the idea of this vision from Petrarch's *Trionfi*. That compo-

sition was written by Petrarch in his latter years ; the Amorous Vision of Boccaccio was evidently produced during his youthful and impassioned intercourse with the princess Maria.

In 1344, he wrote his *Fiammetta*, a romance in prose, more simple in style than any of his preceding prose writings. The heroine of the romance recounts, herself, the story of her amours with Pamphilus. If Boccaccio designed himself under this name, he gives an inspiring picture of his happiness with *Fiammetta* ; but it proves only a short happiness. Their separation, their mutual pangs in absence, her sadness when she believes him unfaithful, their hopes and their fears, fill up a composition which is rather an elegy than a story.

Meanwhile, his father, old as he was, took to himself a new wife ; and, Boccaccio's presence being now less necessary than before, he returned to Naples on the wings of love, and in the hopes of bettering his fortune. With respect to the latter view, things had no promising aspect. King Robert was dead, and the kingdom was governed by the hand of a weak woman, his granddaughter. Very soon the assassination of King Andrew

made Naples a more terrible place than even Florence.

The amusements of the court, however, were not to be interrupted by public troubles; the Princess Maria was the ornament of the court, and Boccaccio, whilst he still enjoyed her love, immortalized her memory by his writings. It appears, too, that he ingratiated himself with Queen Giovanna, who, in spite of her trials and tumults of passion, was a lover of letters, and delighted in the conversation of learned and poetical minds. The great novelist has often celebrated this interesting and unfortunate woman.

Boccaccio remained at Naples from the year 1344 till 1350, when the death of his father, and the charge of the family property and of a younger brother, recalled him to Florence, where he still firmly retained the affections of his fellow-citizens, and was consulted and took a part in public affairs.

In the year of his return to Florence, Petrarch passed through the city, on his way to Rome, to attend the jubilee. They had not met since he had witnessed Petrarch's triumph at his coronation as Laureate. He addressed to him some

Latin verses on his arrival, pressed him to his own house, and knit with him a friendship which lasted for life.

Within the same year he met Petrarch again at Padua, when he was commissioned by the Florentines to convey to the Laureate their decree, restoring him to his civic rights and paternal property. This was not the first honourable commission with which Boccaccio had been charged by his fellow-citizens, nor was it the last. His father, though a merchant by no means opulent, had filled some of the first offices of the state, and our novelist was equally popular with his fellow-citizens.

Before contracting his friendship with Petrarch, Boccaccio had known the high poetical reputation of the Laureate, but it was only as a learned poet; he was not acquainted with Petrarch's rhymes in the vulgar tongue, and he had fondly flattered himself with the hopes of standing second only to Dante on the Parnassus of modern Italian poetry. But when the productions of the bard of Vacluse came into his hands, he was astonished and shaken out of his dream of poetical supremacy, and he actually committed to the flames almost all the verses he had

ever written. When Petrarch heard of this burnt-offering made to himself by his friend's modesty and despair, he regretted it, and reproved him for it. No doubt Boccaccio hereby sacrificed many valuable things; but one good effect resulted, namely, that, seeing no chance of getting the first crown in poetry, he turned himself entirely to prose, and formed a style which, for purity and beauty, has never been surpassed. The charm of his pen, which stamped perpetuity of graceful shape on the Italian language, is chiefly felt in his *Decamerone*. This immortal work had been begun at Naples, but was not finished and published till three years after his return to Florence in 1353. In spite of all the criticism that assailed it, it consummated his fame in Italy, and threw into the shade all preceding Italian prose. It became the standard of style for ages, and has remained so for five hundred years.

Whilst Boccaccio was performing this sublime service to the vulgar tongue, he ceased not to animate his contemporaries in the study of ancient languages, and to study them himself. At great expense and trouble he collected such copies of the great authors of antiquity as had escaped the



ravages of time. During his journeys, whether on public missions or on visits to his personal friends, he every where consulted the learned, and inspected monuments and libraries ; he also collected ancient MSS., Greek and Latin, or copied them with his own hand when he had not the means of procuring them. He transcribed such a number of the Latin historians, orators, and poets, that we should wonder how even a copyist by profession could have written so much.

In an excursion that he made to Monte Cassino, he visited a celebrated monastery, where was a library, which had been pillaged several times during the ages of barbarism, but which was still reputed rich in ancient MSS. Here he was sadly astonished to find that all the books had been banished to a loft, which could not be reached but by a ladder. Grass grew on the windows of this loft, and all the books were covered with either mould or dust. The monks had not even spared the inside of the books : when they wanted a little money, they scraped the parchment of the volume, so as to efface the original writing, and wrote in its place some hymns, or other church compositions, which they sold to women and children. This was

a frequent trick of the monks ; and, if we are indebted to them for the preservation of many ancient authors, we may thank them, perhaps, for the loss of many more.

In 1351, Boccaccio wrote the *Life of Dante*. Buonmattei was of opinion that he was a very young man when he composed this production, but the comparative purity of its prose style shews that it was written later than the *Ameto*, to say nothing of the thoughts which show a mind of more maturity. At the same time, the *Life of Dante* is less pure in style than the *Decamerone*, which saw the light two years afterwards.

Apropos of Dante, though it is anticipating our novelist's history by several years, he made a present of that poet's works to Petrarch, which deserves to be commemorated. Observing that there was no copy of Dante in Petrarch's library, he immediately on his return to Florence sat down to transcribe the valued strains ; and in the following year sent off the MS., in his own very beautiful handwriting, to the bard of Vacluse. It was ornamented with drawings and miniatures, and with burnished gold. Besides this present, Boccaccio enriched the library of Petrarch with several

treatises of Cicero and Varro, copied by his own hand; he also gave him a copy of Livy, and of St. Augustin's work upon the Psalms.

I have mentioned that the Florentines charged him with a mission to Petrarch in 1351, when he found the poet at Padua. In the same year he was sent by the Republic as ambassador to the Margrave of Brandenburg. The Florentines wished to persuade this prince, who was the son of Louis of Bavaria, one of the aspirants to the imperial crown, to make a descent upon Italy, that he might humble the power of the Visconti. It does not appear, however, that his mission was successful.

In 1353, he published his Decamerone. This work had been begun some years before, and, strange as it may seem, one of the gayest literary feasts that ever regaled human taste was, in all probability, commenced by its author whilst he was witnessing the devastations of the plague in 1348. Florence, where Boccaccio was at that time, suffered, even beyond the rest of Italy, from the ravages of that pestilence. It was almost depopulated, its squares and streets were deserted, its houses were empty, and even its churches were almost abandoned. Yet there were some worshippers who still frequented

them; and, at this deplorable crisis, seven young women, of high birth, beauty, and accomplishments, meet in the church of Santa Maria Novella, and, after they have talked some time on the sad subject of the public calamity, one of them proposes to her companions that they should fly from the contagion, and retire together for some days into a delightful spot in the country, where they may breathe fresher air, and enjoy the sweets of spring in congenial and free sociality.

Ladies, however, could not take a country ramble without some gentlemen to accompany them. Three young men of the city, therefore, the lovers of some of them, and the relatives or friends of others, go along with him. Next morning they arrive, a few miles from Florence, at a country-house, surrounded by beautiful gardens, where they devote themselves to making good cheer, to singing and dancing, playing on instruments, walking about or sitting on the grass during the heat of noon, and beguiling the time with telling stories. For each day there is chosen either a king or queen to preside over the company, who is to give orders for their repasts and amusements, and the kind of stories that are to be related. The society is

composed of ten persons. Each of them pays his tribute of a story every day, and they remain ten days in this delightful rustication. Thus the work is naturally divided into ten days, each of which contains ten histories — hence its title, borrowed from the Greek word for ten days.

Boccaccio wrote this work, like several others, in order to please his beloved Princess Maria. It may console unfortunate authors to learn that even the Decamerone of Boccaccio, which now charms all Europe, was at first ill received by a portion of the Italian community. They complained that it was too free in its tone of morality; and, perhaps, if it were to be written over again, something might be corrected in that way. Even a hundred years later, the Florentines, in a fit of morality, condemned Boccaccio's works to the flames. But, as you cannot extirpate opinions by burning those who entertain them, so there is no process of incrimination that will destroy works of genius when they have once come out—their spirit is as immortal as the God that inspired them.

Some of the objections that have been brought against the Decamerone may be too just, but I claim the indulgence of judging of Boccaccio by

his whole effect. I would ask if his faults as a writer are not more than atoned for by his love of truth, by his faith to Nature, by his joyous benevolence, and by his honest hatred of hypocrisy, fraud, and bigotry. I would ask also what it was that stirred up the enmity which first repudiated his Decamerone. Was it the love of innocence and virtue? No such thing! it was the anger of impostors, of voluptuous priests, and of exposed sinners of every kind, that armed a host of furies against him. He was accused of sacrilegiously rending the veil that had concealed the vices of the church—of therefore being an heretical reformer. And so in truth Boccaccio was, without knowing it himself. I consider him, as well as Dante and Petrarch, to have been, all three of them, great practical reformers, though unconscious patriarchs of the Reformation. At a later period, the Florentine critics, with Geronimo Savonarola at their head, preached publicly on the danger of even reading the Decamerone. In 1497, the works of Boccaccio, the Morgante, and a number of indecent pictures, were unfairly associated in martyrdom with the works of men of genius, and consumed by fire, for the enlightenment of the

people, on the last day of the public jubilee. This circumstance accounts for the scarcity of copies of the *Centonovelle* in the fourteenth century. But, in the fifteenth century, the scarcity of copies entirely ceases, and the most famous masters of the Italian press were busy in printing the dangerous *Decamerone*.

Boccaccio has been imitated by the authors of all modern Europe. The French allow that their Molière copied from him the entire subjects of two of his pieces. Among the English, the principal copier from Boccaccio is our own Dryden.

He published, as I have said, his *Decamerone* in the year 1353. In this same year, never to be forgotten, he visited the Lord of Ravenna, and he was sent upon an embassy to Pope Innocent VI. In the same year, he wrote his memorable epistle to Petrarch, in which, in spite of the cordial deference which he shews to him on all other occasions, he reproaches him in no measured terms for his submissive intimacy with the Visconti. Petrarch was at that time in the archbishop's palace, and must have read with no great delight the blame which the honest Boccaccio was not the only friend to pour out upon his conduct.

“I would wish to be silent,” says Boccaccio, “but I cannot hold my peace. My reverence for you would incline me to hold silence, but my indignation obliges me to speak out. How has Silvanus acted? (Under the name of Silvanus he couches that of Petrarch, in allusion to his love of rural retirement.) He has forgotten his dignity; he has forgotten all the language he used to hold respecting the state of Italy, his hatred of the archbishop, and his love of liberty; and he would imprison the Muses in that court. To whom can we now give our faith, when Silvanus, who formerly pronounced the Visconti a cruel tyrant, has now bowed himself to the yoke which he once so boldly condemned! How has the Visconti obtained this truckling, which neither King Robert, nor the pope, nor the emperor, could ever obtain? You will say, perhaps, that you have been ill-used by your fellow-citizens, who have withheld from you your paternal property. I disapprove not your just indignation; but Heaven forbid I should believe that, righteously and honestly, any injury, from whomsoever we may receive it, can justify our taking part against our country. It is in vain for you to allege that you have not incited him to



war against our country, nor lent him either your arm or advice. How can you be happy with him, whilst you are hearing of the ruins, the conflagrations, the imprisonments, the deaths, and the rapines, that he spreads around him !”

Petrarch's answers to these and other reproaches which his friends sent to him were cold, vague, and unsatisfactory. He denied that he had sacrificed his liberty ; and told Boccaccio that, after all, it was less humiliating to be subservient to a single tyrant than to be, as he, Boccaccio, was, subservient to a whole tyrannical people. This was an unwise, implied confession on the part of Petrarch that he was the slave of Visconti. Sismondi may be rather harsh in pronouncing Petrarch to have been all his life a Troubadour ; but there is something in his friendship with the lord of Milan that palliates the accusation. In spite of this severe letter from Boccaccio, it is strange, and yet, methinks, honourable to both, that their friendship was never broken.

His *Corbaccio* was written in 1365. It is a satire on woman in general, and particularly on one woman, with whom, by his own confession, Boccaccio had been in love. What, then, it will be

asked, had become of his Fiammetta? I fear that Boccaccio's love-attachments were, like all human things, perishable. But the Italian writers of his life do not supply us with sufficient information on the subject.

In spite of his severe letter to Petrarch, it is certain that he continued his friendship with him, and it is equally certain that he brought with him to Florence the Greek scholar, Leonzio Pilato, who imparted to Petrarch a little instruction in Greek, and to Boccaccio probably a good deal more.

About this period, it appears that there was a change in the whole constitution of Boccaccio's mind. He became sorry for what he had written. This, I may say, I think, in the true spirit of morality, was an error; for, collectively speaking, the writings of Boccaccio contribute to the cause of morality. So Petrarch himself thought. But a singular accident produced what was called his conversion. A Carthusian monk of Siena, famous for his sanctity, sent to him his friend Ciacono, with the commission to exhort him to change his life, and to write in a different manner. The mission had its full effect. Boccaccio,

palpably weakened in his intellect, repented him of having written works which have been the delight of posterity. In his moral madness, he proposed to sell his whole library of heathen books. Petrarch kindly and wisely advised him to desist from so foolish a design. Siniscalco Acciajuoli was now become the most potent man in Naples, and he affected to patronize Boccaccio; but it was only the affectation of patronage. He took him to a miserable lodging, where he gave him bad accommodation and worse food. From this inhospitable treatment Boccaccio withdrew in 1363, and sought refuge with a kinder friend, Mainardo de Cavalcanti, who for a time gave him shelter and sustenance. Thus it was that the greatest genius of his age, to whose support the poorest Englishman who has ever read his works would now gladly contribute his mite, was obliged to go about,

“ At proud men’s doors to ask a little bread.”

In his old age he visited Petrarch, from whom it may be easily concluded that he received a hearty welcome.

The last works of Boccaccio are the least in-

teresting; indeed, it was not easy to add any thing more interesting than his Decamerone. He returned to Certaldo, where he was seized with a tedious and loathsome disorder, which left him, for a long time, in a state of debility more distressing than the complaint itself. He recovered, to undertake a difficult, but to him doubly flattering task. The Florentines, who had once persecuted and banished their illustrious fellow-citizen, Dante, now instituted a professorship for the explanation of his poem, which became more and more obscure, in proportion to the time that had elapsed since it was written. Boccaccio was well known to be one of his warmest admirers, and he was selected to fill the chair, the duties of which he fulfilled with such unremitting zeal as to impair his health, which was never afterwards completely restored. The news of the death of his friend Petrarch gave him a severe shock, which he survived not much more than a year, dying at Certaldo on the 21st of December, 1375. On his tomb was placed this inscription, written by himself:—

Hac sub mole jacent cineres ac ossa Joannis,  
Mens sedet ante deum meritis ornata laborum,  
Mortalis vitæ. Genitor Bocchaccius illi,  
Patria Certaldum, studium fuit alma poësis.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXI.

Petrarch rejoins the Cardinal of Boulogne at Padua, and travels with him to Verona—View of the Alps and the Lake of Guarda—Visits Mantua—Supper at Luzora—He arrives at Parma—Sets out for Rome to attend the Jubilee—Is kicked by a horse during the journey—Concourse of Pilgrims at Rome—Origin of the Catholic Jubilee—Petrarch returns to Padua—Visits his birth-place, Arezzo—Discovers a copy of Quintilian's "*De Institutione Oratoria*"—Proceeds to Florence—Goes to Padua—Assassination of Jacopo di Carrara—Petrarch receives information of his brother Gherardo—He reviews his Papers.



## CHAPTER XXI.

PETRARCH had returned to Padua, there to rejoin the Cardinal of Boulogne. The Cardinal came back thither at the end of April 1350, and had convoked a council of the bishops, with a view to reconcile the factions which divided Italy. But the solemn convocation effected no pacific purpose, and it ended only in a few laws being enacted with regard to the manners of the clergy and the splendour of public worship.

The cardinal, after dispensing his blessings, spiritual and temporal, set out for Avignon, travelling by way of Milan and Genoa. Petrarch accompanied the prelate out of personal attachment on a part of his journey. The cardinal was fond of his conversation, but sometimes rallied the poet on his enthusiasm for his native Italy. When they reached the territory of Verona, near the lake of Guarda, they

were struck by the beauty of the prospect, and stopped to contemplate it. In the distance were the Alps, topped with snow even in summer. Beneath was the lake of Guarda, with its flux and reflux, like the sea, and around them were the rich hills and fertile valleys. "It must be confessed," said the legate to Petrarch, "that your country is more beautiful than our's." The face of Petrarch brightened up. "But you must agree," continued the cardinal, perhaps to moderate the poet's exultation, "that our's is more tranquil." "That is true," replied Petrarch, "but we can obtain tranquillity whenever we choose to come to our senses, and desire peace, whereas you cannot procure those beauties which nature has lavished *on us*."

Petrarch here took leave of the cardinal, and set out for Parma. Taking Mantua in his way, he set out from thence in the evening, in order to sleep at Luzora, five leagues from the Po. The lords of that city had sent a courier to Mantua, desiring that he would honour them with his presence at supper. The melting snows and the overflowing river had made the roads nearly impassable; but he reached the place in time to avail himself of the invitation. His hosts gave him a magnificent reception. The



supper was exquisite, the dishes rare, the wines delicious, and the company full of gaiety. But a small matter, however, will spoil the finest feast. The supper was served up in a damp, low hall, and all sorts of insects annoyed the convivia. To crown their misfortune, an army of frogs, attracted, no doubt, by the odour of the meats, crowded and croaked about them, till they were obliged to leave their unfinished supper.

Petrarch departed next morning for Parma, and reached it the same day. We find, from the original fragments of his poems, brought to light by Ubaldini, that he was occupied in retouching them during the summer which he passed at Parma.

Here he waited for the termination of the excessive heats, to go to Rome and attend the jubilee. With a view to make the journey pleasanter, he invited Guglielmo di Pastrengo to accompany him, in a letter written in Latin verse. Nothing in the world would have delighted Guglielmo more than a journey to Rome with Petrarch; but he was settled at Verona, and could not absent himself from his family.

In lieu of Pastrengo, Petrarch found a respectable old abbot, and several others who were capable

of being agreeable, and, from their experience, useful companions to him on the road. In the middle of October, 1350, they departed from Florence for Rome, to attend the jubilee. On his way between Bolsena and Viterbo, he met with an accident which threatened dangerous consequences, and which he relates in a letter to Boccaccio.

“On the 15th of October,” he says, “we left Bolsena, a little town scarcely known at present ; but interesting from having been anciently one of the principal places in Etruria. Occupied with the hopes of seeing Rome in five days, I reflected on the changes in our modes of thinking which are made by the course of years. Fourteen years ago I repaired to the great city from sheer curiosity to see its wonders. The second time I came was to receive the laurel. My third and fourth journey had no object but to render services to my persecuted friends. My present visit ought to be more happy, since its only object is my eternal salvation.” It appears, however, that the horses of the travellers had no such devotional feelings ; “for,” he continues, “whilst my mind was full of these thoughts, the horse of the old abbot, which was walking upon my left, kicking at my horse, struck

me upon the leg, just below the knee. The blow was so violent that it sounded as if a bone was broken. My attendants came up. I felt an acute pain, which made me, at first, desirous of stopping; but, fearing the dangerousness of the place, I made a virtue of necessity, and went on to Viterbo, where we arrived very late on the 16th of October. Three days afterwards they dragged me to Rome with much trouble.

“As soon as I arrived at Rome, I called for doctors, who found the bone laid bare. It was not, however, thought to be broken; though the shoe of the horse had left its impression.”

However impatient Petrarch might be to look once more on the beauties of Rome, and to join in the jubilee, he was obliged to keep his bed for many days.

The concourse of pilgrims to this jubilee was immense. One can scarcely credit the common account that there were about a million pilgrims at one time assembled in the great city. “We do not perceive,” says Petrarch, “that the plague has depopulated the world.” And, indeed, if this computation of the congregated pilgrims approaches the truth, we cannot but suspect that the alleged de-

population of Europe, already mentioned, must have been exaggerated. "The crowds," he continues, "diminished a little during summer and the gathering-in of the harvest; but recommenced towards the end of the year. The great nobles and ladies from beyond the Alps came the last."

Many of the female pilgrims arrived by way of the marshes of Ancona, where Bernardino di Roberto, Lord of Ravenna, waited for them, and scandal whispered that his assiduities and those of his suite were but too successful in seducing them. A contemporary author, in allusion to the circumstance, remarks that journeys and indulgences are not good for young persons, and that the fair ones had better have remained at home, since the vessel that stays in port is never shipwrecked.

The strangers, who came from all countries, were for the most part unacquainted with the Italian language, and were obliged to employ interpreters in making their confession, for the sake of obtaining absolution. It was found that many of the pretended interpreters were either imperfectly acquainted with the language of the foreigners, or were knaves in collision with the priestly confessors, who made the poor pilgrims confess what-

ever they choose, and pay for their sins accordingly. A better subject for a scene in comedy could scarcely be imagined. But, to remedy this abuse, penitentiaries were established at Rome, in which the confessors understood foreign languages.

The number of days fixed for the Roman pilgrims to visit the churches was thirty; and fifteen or ten for the Italians and other strangers, according to the distance of the places from which they came.

Petrarch says that it is inconceivable how the city of Rome, whose adjacent fields were untilled, and whose vineyards had been frozen the year before, could for twelve months support such a confluence of people. He extols the hospitality of the citizens, and the abundance of food which prevailed; but Villani and others give us more disagreeable accounts — namely, that the Roman citizens became hotel-keepers, and charged exorbitantly for lodgings, and for whatever they sold. Numbers of pilgrims were thus necessitated to live poorly; and this, added to their fatigue and the heats of summer, produced a great mortality.

As soon as Petrarch, relieved by surgical skill from the wound in his leg, was allowed to go out,

he visited all the churches. According to his own account, the jubilee had a better effect upon his virtues than that which the marshes of Ancona produced on the young lady pilgrims.

After this period, he assures us that he subdued his mind by religious reflections, so as to be proof against all female fascination. As it is difficult to prove a negative, we must take his word for this information; and, as he was under a vow of celibacy, his self-command was, relatively to circumstances, a virtue; yet, we may fairly ask, was it, without consideration of circumstances, a natural virtue? — No, the celibacy of the Roman clergy was not a religious virtue, because it was not founded in common sense.

It is obvious, from a letter written by Petrarch, dated at this period, that he regarded the jubilee as a sacred bath, in which the soul could wash away all its spots. His superior understanding did not prevent him from suspecting this imposture of popery. It should be remarked, however, that this entire remission of sins, which the church granted at certain periods, and on certain conditions, was but of recent date. At the commencement of the year 1300 a rumour had been spread

abroad at Rome that those who came from other places to visit the temple of St. Peter would obtain a plenary indulgence, and that every hundredth year the same dispensing virtue would return to the church.

Boniface VIII. caused researches to be made into ancient books for proofs to confirm this tradition; but none could be found. It is not improbable that the Italians had derived the custom of centennial visits to Rome from the old Roman secular games, and retained it, mixing it up with notions of Christian pilgrimage, for paying their devotions to the tombs of the apostles. Boniface, disappointed in old books, had recourse to old men. An ancient of 107 years deponed, to his entire remembrance, that his father, a labourer, went to Rome to obtain the remission of sins, and advised him to follow his example, if he should live one hundred years longer. Several other centenaries, both in France and Italy, concurred in confirming this tradition; but the age of these witnesses, and the chance of their evidence being suborned in conveyance, leave us room to doubt their testimony.

Boniface, however, was delighted with these evidences, and, after consulting the sacred College,

he published a bull, in which he said : " According to the faithful report of ancient witnesses, there are great indulgences granted to those who visit the church of the prince of the apostles, every hundredth year. We renew and confirm all those customs ; and we grant a plenary indulgence to all those who, confessing and repenting, shall visit Rome at this stated period." Clement VI. reduced the return of the jubilee to fifty years ; Urban VI. in 1389, to thirty-three ; and Paul II., in consideration of human weakness, ordered it to be observed every twenty-fifth year.

After having performed his duties at the jubilee, Petrarch hastened to leave Rome, and returned to Padua. He took the road by Arezzo, the town which had the honour of his birth. Leonardo Aretino says that his fellow-townsmen crowded around him with delight, and received him with such honours as could have been paid only to a king.

In the same month of December, 1350, he discovered a treasure which made him happier than a king. Perhaps a royal head might not have equally valued it. It was a copy of Quintilian's work, "*De Institutione Oratoria*," which, till then,



had escaped all his researches. On the very day of the discovery he wrote a letter to Quintilian, according to his fantastic custom of epistolizing the ancients. Some days afterwards, he left Arezzo to pursue his journey. The principal persons of the town took leave of him publicly at his departure, after pointing out to him the house in which he was born. "It was a small house," says Petrarch, "befitting an exile, as my father was." They told him that the proprietors would have made some alterations in it; but the town had interposed and prevented them, determined that the place should remain the same as when it was first consecrated by his birth. The poet related what has been mentioned to a young man who wrote to him expressly to ask whether Arezzo could really boast of being his birthplace. Petrarch added, that Arezzo had done more for him as a stranger than Florence as a citizen. In truth, his family was of Florence; and it was only by accident that he was born at Arezzo. He then went to Florence, where he made but a short stay. There he found his friends still alarmed about the accident which had befallen him in his journey to Rome, the news of which he had communicated to Boccaccio. On this occasion,

Francesco, prior of the Holy Apostles, wrote to him a most affectionate letter, full of imprecations on the impious horse which had dared to kick our poet. It may be doubted if this brute was in any degree benefited by the all-sin-scouring absolutions of the jubilee; but he might have pleaded for pardon on the score that he had not intended to kick Petrarch, but an animal of a different species.

Petrarch went on to Padua. On approaching it, he perceived a universal mourning. He soon learned the foul catastrophe which had deprived the city of one of its best masters.

Jacopo di Carrara had received into his house his cousin Guglielmo. Though the latter was known to be an evil-disposed person, he was treated with kindness by Jacopo, and ate at his table. On the 21st of December, whilst Jacopo was sitting at supper, in the midst of his friends, his people and his guards, the monster Guglielmo plunged a dagger into his breast with such celerity that even those who were nearest could not ward off the blow. Horror-struck, they lifted him up, whilst others put the assassin to instant death.

The fate of Jacopo Carrara gave Petrarch a dislike for Padua, and his recollections of Vacluse bent his unsettled mind to return to its solitude;

but he tarried at Padua during the winter. Here he spent a great deal of his time with Ildebrando Conti, bishop of that city, a man of rank and merit. One day, as he was dining at the bishop's palace, two Carthusian monks were announced: they were well received by the bishop, as he was partial to their order. He asked them what brought them to Padua. "We are going," they said, "to Treviso, by the direction of our general there to remain and establish a monastery." Ildebrando asked if they knew Father Gherardo, Petrarch's brother. The two monks, who did not know the poet, gave the most pleasing accounts of his brother.

The plague, they said, having got into the convent of Montrieux, the prior, a pious but timorous man, told his monks that flight was the only course which they could take, Gherardo answered with courage, "Go whither you please! As for myself, I will remain in the situation in which Heaven has placed me." The prior fled to his own country, where death soon overtook him. Gherardo remained in the convent, where the plague spared him, and left him alone, after having destroyed, within a few days, thirty-four of the brethren who had continued with him. He paid them every service, received their last sighs, and buried them

when death had taken off those to whom that office belonged. With only a dog left for his companion, Gherardo watched at night to guard the house, and took his repose by day. When the summer was over, he went to a neighbouring monastery of the Carthusians, who enabled him to restore his convent.

While the Carthusians were making this honourable mention of Father Gherardo, the prelate cast his eyes from time to time upon Petrarch. "I know not," says the poet, "whether my eyes were filled with tears, but my heart was tenderly touched." The Carthusians, at last discovering who Petrarch was, saluted him with congratulations. Petrarch gives an account of this interview in a letter to his brother himself.

It was about this time that he made a regular review of all his papers. Like a mariner on the eve of undertaking a long voyage, he collected all the useful things that he could carry with him, and destroyed those that were useless. He opened old trunks, that were covered with dust and filled with papers half devoured by vermin. His first impulse was to throw them all into the fire; but his curiosity to re-peruse them saved some of them from the general doom.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXII.

Petrarch becomes acquainted with Andrea Dandolo, Doge of Venice—Commercial Rivalry of the Venetians and the Genoese—War between them—Petrarch's Letter to the Doge, written for the purpose of reconciling the two Republics, but without effect—Boccaccio brings him intelligence of the recall of his family to Florence, and the restoration of his paternal property—Retrospect of the Causes of its having been withheld—Petrarch writes an Inscription for the Monument of James of Carrara—He leaves Padua for Provence—Conversation at Vicenza on the Character of Cicero—He proceeds to Verona.

## CHAPTER XXII.

PADUA was too near to Venice for Petrarch not to visit now and then that city which he called the wonder of the world. He there made acquaintance with Andrea Dandolo, who was made Doge in 1343, though he was only thirty-six years of age, an extraordinary elevation for so young a man; but he possessed extraordinary merit. He joined to high talents for government a fine external appearance and captivating manners. It was alleged that Isabella of Fiesca found him seductively agreeable, when she made her famous pilgrimage to Venice, and that he shared with the charming Ugolino Gonzagua the favours of the Princess of Milan.

Andrea Dandolo's mind was cultivated; he loved literature, and easily became, as far as mutual demonstrations went, the personal friend of Petrarch; though the Doge, as we shall see, excluded

this personal friendship from all influence on his political conduct.

The commerce of the Venetians made great progress under the Dogeship of Andrea Dandolo. It was then that they began to trade with Egypt and Syria, whence they brought silk, pearls, the spices and other products of the East. This prosperity excited the jealousy of the Genoese, as it interfered with a commerce which they had hitherto monopolized. When the Venetians had been chased from Constantinople by the Emperor Michael Paleologus, they retained several fortresses in the Black Sea, which enabled them to continue their trade with the Tartars in that sea, and to frequent the fair of Tana. The Genoese, who were masters of Pera, a suburb of Constantinople, would willingly have joined the Greeks in expelling their Italian rivals altogether from the Black Sea; and privateering hostilities actually commenced between the two republics, which, in 1350, extended to the serious aspect of a national war. The Genoese, having found some Venetian vessels in the port of Caffa, took possession of them. Venice sent Marino Faliero to Genoa, to complain of the insult and to demand restitution of the vessels, which was refused.

The Venetians instantly armed thirty or forty galleys, which surprised fourteen and captured ten Genoese vessels of the same class, in the harbour of Caristo, near Negropont. Four of the Genoese galleys escaped. The commander of the squadron was taken, with fourteen hundred men. This occurred in August, 1350. The four galleys of Genoa that escaped fell in with six others commanded by Filippo Doria, who came from Cyprus. This commander, having learned that the Venetians had sailed for Constantinople, went to Negropont under Venetian colours—a bold enterprise in which he succeeded. He took possession of the town, which was ill defended by the governor, and sent a great number of prisoners to Genoa. The Venetians, on their side, having failed at Pera, which they found in a state of defence, returned to Venice, in November, 1350.

The winter was passed on both sides in preparations for offensive and defensive war. The Venetians sent ambassadors to the King of Arragon, who had some differences with the Genoese about the island of Sardinia, and to the Emperor of Constantinople, who saw with any sensation in the world but delight the flag of Genoa flying over the walls



of Pera. A league between those three powers was quickly concluded, and their grand, common object was to destroy the city of Genoa.

It was impossible that these great movements of Venice should be unknown at Padua. Petrarch, ever zealous for the common good of Italy, saw with pain the kindling of a war which could not but be fatal to her, and thought it his duty to open his heart to the Doge of Venice, who had shewn him so much friendship. He addressed to him, therefore, the following letter from Padua, on the 14th of March, 1351.

“My love for my country forces me to break silence; the goodness of your character encourages me. Can I hold my peace whilst I hear the symptoms of a coming storm that menaces my beloved country? Two puissant people are flying to arms; two flourishing cities are agitated by the approach of war. These cities are placed by nature like the two eyes of Italy; the one in the south and west, and the other in the east and north, to dominate over the two seas that surround them; so that, even after the destruction of the Roman empire, this beautiful country was still regarded as the queen of the world. I know that proud nations

denied her the empire of the land, but who dared ever to dispute with her the empire of the sea ?

“ I shudder to think of our prospects. If Venice and Genoa turn their victorious arms against each other, it is all over with us ; we lose our glory and the command of the sea. In this calamity we shall have a consolation which we have ever had, namely, that if our enemies rejoice in our calamities, they cannot at least derive any glory from them.

“ In great affairs I have always dreaded the counsels of the young. Youthful ignorance and inexperience have been the ruin of many empires. I, therefore, learn with pleasure that you have named a council of elders, to whom you have confided this affair. I expected no less than this from your wisdom, which is far beyond your years.

“ The state of your republic distresses me. I know the difference that there is between the tumult of arms and the tranquillity of Parnassus. I know that the sounds of Apollo's lyre accord but ill with the trumpets of Mars ; but if you have abandoned Parnassus, it has been only to fulfil the duties of a good citizen and of a vigilant chief. I am persuaded, at the same time, that in the midst of arms you think of peace ; that you would regard it as a

triumph for yourself, and the greatest blessing you could procure for your country. Did not Hannibal himself say that a sure peace was more valuable than a hoped-for victory ! If truth has extorted this confession from the most warlike man that ever lived, is it not plain that a pacific man ought to prefer peace even to a certain victory ! Who does not know that peace is the greatest of blessings, and that war is the source of all evils !

“ Do not deceive yourself ; you have to deal with a keen people who know not what it is to be conquered. Would it not be better to transfer the war to Damascus, to Susa, or to Memphis ? Think, besides, that those whom you are going to attack are your brothers. At Thebes, of old, two brothers fought to their mutual destruction. Must Italy renew, in our days, so atrocious a spectacle ?

“ Let us examine what may be the results of this war. Whether you are conqueror or are conquered, one of the eyes of Italy will necessarily be blinded, and the other much weakened ; for it would be folly to flatter yourself with the hopes of conquering so strong an enemy without much effusion of blood.

‘ Brave men, powerful people ! (I speak here to

both of you) what is your object — to what do you aspire? What will be the end of your dissensions? It is not the blood of the Carthaginians or the Numantians that you are about to spill, but it is Italian blood; the blood of a people who would be the first to start up and offer to expend their blood, if any barbarous nation were to attempt a new irruption among us. In that event, their bodies would be the bucklers and ramparts of our common country; they would live, or they would die with us. Ought the pleasure of avenging a slight offence to carry more weight with you than the public good and your own safety? Let revenge be the delight of women. Is it not more glorious for men to forget an injury than to avenge it? to pardon an enemy than to destroy him?

“If my feeble voice could make itself be heard among those grave men who compose your council, I am persuaded that you would not only *not* reject the peace which is offered to you, but go to meet and embrace it closely, so that it might not escape you. Consult your wise old men who love the republic; they will speak the same language to you that I do.

“You, my lord, who are at the head of the

council, and who govern your republic, ought to recollect that the glory or the shame of these events will fall principally on you. Raise yourself above yourself; look into, examine every thing with attention. Compare the success of the war with the evils which it brings in its train. Weigh in a balance the good effects and the evil, and you will say with Hannibal, that an hour is sufficient to destroy the work of many years.

“The renown of your country is more ancient than is generally believed. Several ages before the city of Venice was built, I find not only the name of the Venetians famous, but also that of one of their dukes. Would you submit to the caprices of fortune a glory acquired for so long a time, and at so great a cost? You will render a great service to your republic, if, preferring her safety to her glory, you give her incensed and insane populace prudent and useful counsels, instead of offering them brilliant and specious projects. The wise say that we cannot purchase a virtue more precious than what is bought at the expense of glory. If you adopt this axiom, your character will be handed down to posterity, like that of the Duke of the Venetians, to whom I have alluded. All the world will admire and love you.

“To conceal nothing from you, I confess that I have heard with grief of your league with the King of Arragon. What! shall Italians go and implore succour of barbarous kings to destroy Italians? You will say, perhaps, that your enemies have set you the example. My answer is, that they are equally culpable. According to report, Venice, in order to satiate her rage, calls to her aid tyrants of the west; whilst Genoa brings in those of the east. This is the source of our calamities. Carried away by the admiration of strange things, despising, I know not why, the good things which we find in our own climate, we sacrifice sound Italian faith to barbarian perfidy. Madmen that we are, we seek among venal souls that which we could find among our own brethren.

“Nature has given us for barriers the Alps and the two seas. Avarice, envy, and pride, have opened these natural defences to the Cimbri, the Huns, the Goths, the Gauls, and the Spaniards. How often have we recited the words of Virgil:—

*Impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit,  
Barbarus has segetes.*

“Athens and Lacedemon had between them a species of rivalry similar to your's; but their

forces were not by any means so nearly balanced. Lacedemon had an advantage over Athens, which put it in the power of the former to destroy her rival, if she had wished it ; but she replied, ‘ God forbid that I should pull out one of the eyes of Greece !’ If this beautiful sentiment came from a people whom Plato reproaches with their avidity for conquest and dominion, what still softer reply ought we not to expect from the most modest of nations !

“ Amidst the movements which agitate you, it is impossible for me to be tranquil. When I see one party cutting down trees to construct vessels, and others sharpening their swords and darts, I should think myself guilty if I did not seize my pen, which is my only weapon, to counsel peace. I am aware with what circumspection we ought to speak to our superiors ; but the love of our country has no superior. If it should carry me beyond bounds, it will serve as my excuse before you, and oblige you to pardon me.

“ Throwing myself at the feet of the chiefs of two nations who are going to war, I say to them, with tears in my eyes, ‘ Throw away your arms ; give one another the embrace of peace ! unite your

hearts and your colours. By this means the ocean and the Euxine shall be open to you. Your ships will arrive in safety at Taprobane, at the Fortunate Isles, at Thule, and even at the poles. The kings and their people will meet you with respect; the Indian, the Englishman, the Æthiopian, will dread you. May peace reign among you, and may you have nothing to fear! Adieu! greatest of dukes, and best of men!"

This letter produced no effect. Andrea Dandolo, in his answer to it, alleges the thousand and one affronts and outrages which Venice had suffered from Genoa. At the same time, he pays a high compliment to the eloquence of Petrarch's epistle, and says that it is a production which could emanate only from a mind inspired by the divine spirit.

During the spring of this year, 1351, Petrarch put his last finish to a canzone, on the subject still nearest to his heart, the death of his Laura, and to a sonnet on the same subject. In April, his attention was recalled from visionary things by the arrival of Boccaccio, who was sent by the republic of Florence to announce to him the recall of his family



to their native land, and the restoration of his family fortune. The latter announcement was rather a matter of shew than of substance.

It will be remembered, from what has been said of our poet's family, that Petracco, the father of Petrarch, had been unjustly accused by the predominant faction in Florence of executing a false deed, and condemned to pay a fine of 1000 lire, or, in failure of payment, to lose his right hand; that subsequently the Florentines, having recognized his innocence, permitted him to return to his country; but that Petracco was too distrustful of his forgiving enemies to return amongst them, and that he settled at Avignon. His effects were sold by order of the Senate. The friends of Petrarch had demanded more than once that those effects of the father thus unjustly confiscated should be restored to the son. But the Guelphic party which predominated had always eluded this proposal under different pretexts. At last, however, the friends of Petrarch carried the matter in the Senate; and Boccaccio was sent to Petrarch, at Padua, to invite him to the home of his ancestors, in the name of the Florentine re-

public. The invitation was conveyed in a long and flattering letter to him ; but it appeared, from the very contents of this epistle, that the Florentines wished our poet's acceptance of their offer to be as advantageous to themselves as to him. They were establishing a University, and they wished to put Petrarch at the head of it. Petrarch replied in a letter apparently full of gratitude and satisfaction, but in which he by no means pledged himself to be the gymnasiarch of their new college ; and, agreeably to his original intention, he set out from Padua on the 3rd of May, 1351, for Provence.

On his leaving Padua, his friends persuaded him that he ought not to quit it without fulfilling his promise to write some verses to be inscribed on the mausoleum of James of Carrara, on which mausoleum the best sculptors of Italy were now employed.

This proposal embarrassed Petrarch. All his arrangements were made for his departure. He could not postpone it ; and he was not in a frame of mind for composing. But feeling, at last, a disposition to be inspired, he went with a few

friends to the church of the Augustines, where James of Carrara was interred. He found it shut, and it was necessary to wait till the sacristans had finished their dinner. The moment the doors were opened, Petrarch entered the church, and seated himself on a tomb, where he composed sixteen Latin verses, and gave them to those who had accompanied him, saying, "I wished to have done something better, but I have not time; you can choose among these verses those that please you, and they can be engraved upon the marble, unless we find something better before the mausoleum is finished."

The lines are omitted by De Sade, in his *Memoirs of Petrarch*, and I think deservedly, as unworthy of the poet; but they are to be found in more than one edition of his works.

Having delivered the verses, which betray their hasty composition, Petrarch mounted his horse, and took the road to Vicenza, where he arrived at sunset. He hesitated whether he should stop there, or take advantage of the remainder of the day and go farther. But, meeting with some interesting persons whose conversation beguiled him,

night came on before he was aware how late it was. On this incident he remarks, that our friends are the greatest robbers of our time; but ought we to complain of this robbery? and can we make a better use of time than to pass it with our friends? Their conversation, in the course of the evening, ran upon Cicero. Many were the eulogies passed on the great old Roman; but Petrarch, after having lauded his divine genius and eloquence, said something about his inconsistency. Every one was astonished at our poet's boldness, but particularly a man, venerable for his age and knowledge, who was an idolater of Cicero. Petrarch argued pretty freely against the political character of the ancient orator. The same opinion as to Cicero's weakness seems rather to have gained ground in later ages. At least, it is now agreed that Cicero's political life will not bear throughout an uncharitable investigation, though the political difficulties of his time demand abundant allowance.

Petrarch departed next morning for Verona, where he reckoned on remaining only for a few days; but it was impossible for him to resist the importunities of Azzo Correggio, Guglielmo di Pas-

trengo, and his other friends. By them he was detained during the remainder of the month, "The requests of a friend," he said, on this occasion, "are always chains upon me."

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXIII.

Petrarch revisits Provence—And Vacluse—He finds Avignon as profligate as ever—His Seventh Eclogue, which is a Satire on Clement VI. and his Cardinals—State of Rome at this period—Defence and Acquittal of Queen Giovanna before the Papal Court—Nicola Acciajuoli, Grand Steward of Naples—Petrarch is visited at Vacluse by the Bishop of Florence—His Son John—Rienzo, the Tribune, brought as a Prisoner to Avignon—His History, after losing the Chief Authority at Rome—His reception at Naples by the King of Hungary—He returns secretly to Rome at the time of the Jubilee—Seeks the protection of the Emperor Charles—His Journey to Avignon—Petrarch's account of him—He is Imprisoned by Pope Clement—Appeal to the Roman People in behalf of Rienzo, attributed to Petrarch, suspected to be spurious—Illness of the Pope—Petrarch's attack on the Medical Profession—Vindication of Physicians—Indignation of the Faculty against Petrarch—He accepts, but soon resigns the office of Secretary to the Pope—Returns to Vacluse—Picture of his Female At-

tendant—His habits—He waits at Avignon for the Cardinal of Boulogne—Again attempts to reconcile the Genoese and the Venetians—Sets out for Italy, but gives up his Journey on account of the Rain—Death of Pope Clement VI.—His Character—Petrarch's dislike of Clement—Elevation of the Cardinal of Ostia to the Tiara, by the title of Innocent VI.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

PETRARCH, in spite of the manifestations of kindness which he had met with from the Florentines, turned his face towards France, and, coming back for the sixth time to Provence, arrived at Vacluse on the 27th of June, 1351. He first announced his arrival to Philip of Cabassoles, Bishop of Cavaillon, to whom he had already sent, during his journey, some Latin verses, in which he speaks of Vacluse as the most charming place in the universe. "When a child," he says, "I visited it, and it nourished my youth in its sunny bosom. When grown to manhood, I passed some of the pleasantest years of my life in the shut-up valley. Grown old, I wish to pass in it my last years."

Valle puer clausa fueram, juvenemque reversum  
Fovit in aprico vallis amoena sino—  
Valle, vir, in clausa meliores dulciter annos—  
Exegi et vitæ candida fila meae,  
Valle, senex, clausa, supremum ducere tempus,  
In clausa cupio, te duce, valle mori.



The sight of his romantic hermitage, of the capacious grotto which had listened to his sighs for Laura, of his garden, and of his library, was, undoubtedly, sweet to Petrarch; and, though he had promised Boccaccio to come back to Italy, he had not the fortitude to determine on a sudden return. He writes to one of his Italian friends, "When I left my native country, I promised to return to it in the autumn; but time, place, and circumstances, often oblige us to change our resolutions. As far as I can judge, it will be necessary for me to remain here for two years. My friends in Italy, I trust, will pardon me if I do not keep my promise to them. The inconstancy of the human mind must serve as my excuse. I have now experienced that change of place is the only thing which can long keep from us the ennui that is inseparable from a sedentary life."

At the same time, whilst Vacluse threw recollections tender, though melancholy, over Petrarch's mind, it does not appear that Avignon had assumed any new charm in his absence: on the contrary, he found it plunged more than ever in luxury, wantonness, and gluttony. Clement VI. had replenished the church, at the request of the French

king, with numbers of cardinals, many of whom were so young and licentious, that the most scandalous abominations prevailed amongst them. "At this time," says Matthew Villani, "no regard was paid either to learning or virtue; and a man needed not to blush for any thing, if he could cover his head with a red hat. Pietro Ruggiero, one of those exemplary new cardinals, was only eighteen years of age." Petrarch vented his indignation on this occasion in his seventh eclogue, which is a satire upon the pontiff and his cardinals, the interlocutors being Micione, or Clement himself, and Epi, or the city of Avignon. The poem, if it can be so called, is clouded with allegory, and denaturalized with pastoral conceits; yet it is worth being explored by any one anxious to trace the first fountains of reform among catholics, as a proof of church abuses having been exposed, two centuries before the reformation, by a catholic and a churchman.

At this crisis, the court of Avignon, which, in fact, had not known very well what to do about the affairs of Rome, were now anxious to inquire what sort of government would be the most advisable, after the fall of Rienzo. Since that event,

the Cardinal Legate had re-established the ancient government, having created two senators, the one from the house of Colonna, the other from that of the Orsini. But, very soon, those houses were divided by discord, and the city was plunged into all the evils which it had suffered before the existence of the Tribuneship. "The community at large," says Matthew Villani, "returned to such condition, that strangers and travellers found themselves like sheep among wolves." Clement VI. was weary of seeing the metropolis of Christianity a prey to anarchy. He therefore chose four cardinals, whose united deliberations might appease these troubles, and he imagined that he could establish in Rome a form of government that should be durable. The cardinals requested Petrarch to give his opinion on this important affair. Petrarch wrote to them a most eloquent epistle, full of the same enthusiastic ideas of the grandeur of Rome which had filled his letter, already quoted, to Cola da Rienzo. It is not exactly known what effect he produced by his writing on this subject ; but on that account we are not to conclude that he wrote in vain.

Another very important affair, which at that

time necessarily occupied the court of Avignon, was the peace concluded between Lewis of Hungary and the Queen Giovanna of Naples. She defended herself with so much effect before the pope, that her judges pronounced her innocent. Many witnesses deposed that, by means of sorcery, she had been imbued with the strongest aversion for her husband, Andrew; and that, in spite of herself, she could not help hating him; that some of her partizans, wishing to render her a service, had disposed of the king; but that she was not accessory to his death, and could not be blamed for it.

The Neapolitans, discontented with the government of the Hungarians, and learning that the pontiff and his cardinals had acquitted Giovanna, recalled her to her hereditary throne. The queen, at parting, bestowed the city of Avignon on the Pope and the church, for a certain sum, which gratified his holiness so much, that, in giving her his benediction, he gave the title of king to her husband, Lewis of Tarento. The royal pair, embarking at Naples, were there received with enthusiasm; but their prosperity, for the present, was of short duration. The armies of the King of Hungary entered Naples anew, and obliged Giovanna and her husband to re-

tire to Gaeta. At last, however, both the Hungarians and Neapolitans grew tired of the war, and concluded a truce for a year, which became the basis of a more lasting peace. The King of Hungary gave favourable terms to Lewis of Tarento, in consideration of the judgment pronounced by the pope and his cardinals.

The conjugal sovereigns of Naples were much indebted for this prosperous issue of their affairs to the influence and advice of Nicola Acciajuoli, who was selected by them to be the seneschal or grand steward of the kingdom. This Florentine, in many respects illustrious, though his memory is disgraced by his meanness to Boccaccio, had been the tutor of Lewis of Tarento during his childhood. After the death of Andrew, he had strongly counselled Giovanna, nothing loth, to marry her lover of Tarento. When the Hungarians invaded the kingdom, and chased Lewis and his spouse out of Naples, Acciajuoli followed them into Provence, where, before the pontifical court, he pleaded the innocence of the queen. Finally, Nicola assisted Giovanna to conclude a peace with the Hungarians, on which Petrarch wrote him a long letter of congratulation.

Petrarch was obliged by business to spend a part of May, 1352, in his hated Babylon of the west, Avignon. The bishop of Florence, who was then at that place, told our poet that he would not quit the country until he had seen the far-famed fountain of Vaucluse. Petrarch, who knew the bishop to be a man of his word, made haste to his little country-house, and prepared every delicacy that was purchaseable for his reception. On the day when the prelate was expected, every thing was ready. It struck twelve, the usual dinner-hour, but no bishop appeared. Petrarch, who had been at the expence of a great feast, grew very impatient. But, while he was venting his perturbation, he heard a great noise. It was the bishop who had just arrived. When they were at table, the discourse turned on the subject of Nicola Acciajuoli, the high steward of Naples. The bishop told Petrarch that Nicola had just quarrelled with his best friend, John Barrilli, one of the greatest lords at the court of Naples. "I am grieved at this quarrel," said the bishop; "but you are the friend of both, and should make it up between them." Petrarch undertook the task, and, by his persuasion, brought about a reconciliation.

Petrarch had brought to Avignon his son John, who was still very young. He had obtained for him a canonicate at Verona. Thither he immediately despatched him, with letters to Guglielmo di Pastrengo and Rinaldo di Villa Franca, charging the former of these friends to superintend his son's general character and manners, and the other to cultivate his understanding. Petrarch, in his letter to Rinaldo, gives a description of John, which is neither very flattering to the youth, nor calculated to give us a favourable opinion of his father's mode of managing his education. By his own account, it appears that he had never brought the boy to confide in him. This was a capital fault, for the young are naturally ingenuous ; so that the acquisition of their confidence is the very first step towards their docility ; and, for maintaining parental authority, there is no need to overawe them. "As far as I can judge of my son," says Petrarch, "he has a tolerable understanding ; but I am not certain of this, for I do not sufficiently know him. When he is with me he always keeps silence ; whether my presence is irksome and confusing to him, or whether shame for his ignorance closes his lips. I suspect that it is the latter, for I perceive

too clearly his antipathy to letters. I never saw it stronger in any one ; he dreads and detests nothing so much as a book ; yet he was brought up at Parma, Verona, and Padua. I sometimes direct a few sharp pleasantries at this disposition. ‘Take care,’ I say, ‘lest you should eclipse your neighbour, Virgil.’ When I talk in this manner, he looks down and blushes. On this behaviour alone I build my hope. He is modest, and has a docility which renders him susceptible of every impression.” This is a melancholy confession, on the part of Petrarch, of his own incompetence to make the most of his son’s mind, and a confession the more convincing that it is made unconsciously.

In the summer of 1352, the people of Avignon witnessed the impressive spectacle of the far-famed Tribune Rienzo entering their city, but in a style very different from the pomp of his late processions in Rome. He had now for his attendants only two archers, between whom he walked as a prisoner. It is necessary to say a few words about the circumstances which befel Rienzo after his fall, and which brought him now to the pope’s tribunal at Avignon.

After Rienzo had quitted the Capitol of Rome,



in a manner so little creditable to his courage, he shut himself up in the castle of St. Angelo, where, wishing to know what the Romans still thought of him, he caused the picture of an angel, holding in his hand a cross surmounted by a dove, and trampling on an asp, a basilisk, a lion, and a dragon, to be displayed, with the arms of Rome, on the walls of the church of St. Magdalen. He went himself in disguise to observe what impression this emblematic picture might make upon the people. When he saw them cover it with mud, he perceived that he was not likely to regain his ascendancy; and embarked next morning for Naples, where he arrived in January, 1348.

In the mean time, the king of Hungary had possessed himself of the royalty of Naples. He received Rienzo kindly, having formerly had some secret communications with him. But this gave uneasiness to the pope, who, through his legate, required the king of Hungary to send to him this perverse man, Rienzo, who was already excommunicated, and accused of heresy. The king of Hungary had not courage to protect his guest, who, finding himself abandoned by all, retired among the hermits of Monte Magella, and there, most probably, spent the whole of the year 1349.

The jubilee at Rome, in 1350, excited Rienzo's wishes to revisit the scenes of his former glory. He glided into the city unknown, and found the Romans better disposed towards him than he expected. The disorder which had reigned since his departure made them regret his loss; and he perceived the number of his partizans much augmented. He adroitly fomented the popular discontent. The legate, Cardinal Cecano, whose life was threatened by the general sedition, knew that Rienzo was in Rome, and wrote to the pope that the ex-Tribune was promoting this rebellious spirit. Clement replied that he had been apprised of the wishes of the Romans to re-establish their Tribune; but he directed the cardinal to continue the processes already begun against Rienzo, and to send him to him if he could lay hold of him. Cecano accordingly excommunicated Rienzo anew, as an infamous heretic, and interdicted him from fire and water.

If Rienzo had fallen immediately into the hands of his enemies, they would probably have treated him to more fire than water; but he took the singular step of throwing himself on the clemency of the Emperor Charles, though, in the height of his

power, he had affronted that sovereign by citing him before his tribunal. Rienzo departed from Rome in June, 1350, and, in his ordinary disguise, proceeded with the caravan of the pilgrims to Prague, where the emperor, who was also king of Bohemia, usually resided. A contemporary historian says that he went first to the house of a Florentine apothecary, whom he prevailed upon to accompany him to the emperor, and that he addressed this singular speech to his imperial majesty : "There is at Monte Magella a hermit, called brother Angelo, who has sent an ambassador to the pope, and who has commissioned me to announce to you that, whereas, until now, God the Father and the Son have reigned over the world, in future the Holy Ghost is to reign." At these words the emperor recognized Rienzo, and said, "I believe you are the Tribune of Rome." "I am that Tribune," replied Rienzo. This conversation, however, which De Sade has taken from Polistore, is improbable in itself, and is strongly contradicted by Cesenate in his *Life of Cola di Rienzo*.

Rienzo, according to his favourable biographers, was not forced by the emperor to repair to Avignon, but went of his own accord to justify himself before



the pope. It is no doubt strange if his visit to the pope was so voluntary, that he should have gone roundabout by Bohemia, and should have required an archer right and left to escort him to Avignon. Nevertheless, his progress is allowed to have been more like that of a conqueror than of a criminal. In all the places through which he passed, the people, according to his favourable biographers, offered him deliverance; but he always answered that he was going with his own consent to Avignon.

Petrarch says of him at this period, "The Tribune, formerly so powerful and dreaded, but now the most unhappy of men, has been brought hither as a prisoner. I praised and I adored him. I loved his virtue, and I admired his courage. I thought that Rome was about to resume, under him, the empire she formerly held. Ah! had he continued as he began, he would have been praised and admired by the world and by posterity. On entering the city," Petrarch continues, "he inquired if I was there. I knew not whether he hoped for succour from me, or what I could do to serve him. In the process against him they accuse him of nothing criminal. They cannot impute to

him having joined with bad men. All that they charge him with is an attempt to give freedom to the republic, and to make Rome the centre of its government. And is this a crime worthy of the wheel or the gibbet? A Roman citizen afflicted to see his country, which is by right the mistress of the world, the slave of the vilest of men!"

Clement was glad to have Rienzo in his power, and ordered him into his presence. Thither the Tribune came, not in the least disconcerted. He denied the accusation of heresy, and insisted that his cause should be re-examined with more equity. The pope made him no reply, but imprisoned him in a high tower, in which he was chained by the leg to the floor of his apartment. In other respects he was treated mildly, allowed books to read, and supplied with dishes from the pope's kitchen.

Rienzo begged to be allowed an advocate to defend him; his request was refused. This refusal enraged Petrarch, who wrote, according to De Sade and others, on this occasion, that mysterious letter, which is found in his "Epistles without a title." It is an appeal to the Romans in behalf of their Tribune. I must confess that

even the authority of De Sade does not entirely eradicate from my mind a suspicion as to the spuriousness of this letter. De Sade himself adds immediately that Petrarch durst not put his name to it, and apparently took all precautions that the epistle should be a secret one.

A secret letter to a whole people ! De Sade naïvely confesses that he cannot very well see how such a letter could be kept a secret, and that he is astonished at Petrarch's having escaped with impunity for having written it. If, as De Sade says, the style decidedly proves its author, his contemporaries must have immediately traced it to him, and so inflammatory a production must have drawn down instant displeasure on our poet's head. To all appearance it never did ; so that I cannot but take refuge from sympathizing with De Sade's astonishment in certain doubts as to the authenticity of the letter.

One of the circumstances that detained Petrarch at Avignon was the illness of the pope, which retarded his decision on several important affairs. Clement VI. was fast approaching to his end, and Petrarch had little hope of his convalescence, at least in the hands of doctors. A message from the

pope produced an imprudent letter from the poet, in which he says, "Holy father ! I shudder at the account of your fever ; but, believe me, I am not a flatterer. I tremble to see your bed always surrounded with physicians, who are never agreed, because it would be a reproach to the second to think like the first. ' It is not to be doubted,' as Pliny says, ' that physicians, desiring to raise a name by their discoveries, make experiments upon us, and thus barter away our lives. There is no law for punishing their extreme ignorance. They learn their trade at our expence, they make some progress in the art of curing ; and they alone are permitted to murder with impunity.' Holy father, consider as your enemies the crowd of physicians who beset you. It is in our age that we behold verified the prediction of the elder Cato, who declared that corruption would be general when the Greeks should have transmitted the sciences to Rome, and, above all, the science of healing. Whole nations have done without this art. The Roman republic, according to Pliny, was without physicians for six hundred years, and was never in a more flourishing condition."

In some respects we see the liberalism of Pe-

trarch in advance of his age ; but, in this letter, who can fail to remark him as a conservative of ignorance ? It is true that the science of medicine was at that time very imperfect, but, by his own confession, physicians had made some progress in the art of curing. It was unworthy of Petrarch's intelligence not to perceive that medicine, like every other science, must acquire improvement by cultivation, if, as he confesses, practice and experience lead to knowledge. Derision of physicians may amuse us in farces or novels, but the man who could seriously imagine that the world might be improved by discouraging the profession can, in my opinion, scarcely be considered in his sane mind. What would such a visionary be at ? Would he abolish the science of surgery, or wish that, when a leg is shattered, there may be no one skilful enough to amputate it, or to bind up its splinters ? Petrarch himself called in a surgeon when the horse kicked him on his way to Rome. But, if you encourage surgery, you must tolerate at least the profession of medicine, for, without proper medical treatment, the surgeon's patient cannot in all probability be saved. He must have febrifuges, opiates, or sti-



mulants, according to his condition. How, then, are you to dismiss the science of medicine, and preserve that of surgery? With regard to the Romans, the frequent repetition of their laws against Greek physicians is the best proof that those laws were very little attended to.

The pope, a poor dying old man, communicated Petrarch's letter immediately to his physicians, and it kindled in the whole faculty a flame of indignation, worthy of being described by Molière. Petrarch made a general enemy of the physicians, though, of course, the weakest and the worst of them were the first to attack him. One of them told him, "You are a foolhardy man, who, contemning the physicians, have no fear of either the fever or of the malaria." Petrarch replied, "I certainly have no assurance of being free from the attacks of either; but, if I were attacked by either, I should not think of calling in physicians."

His first assailant was one of Clement's own physicians, who loaded him with scurrility in a formal letter. Petrarch says that he discovered its anonymous author to be a mountaineer, a toothless old practitioner. The Abbé de Sade thinks that it was the celebrated Guido de Chauliac; but the uncertainty which hangs over this matter re-

rifies the prediction of Petrarch, that the author of the letter never would become famous ; and he is so obscure a person that at present his name is unknown. These circumstances brought forth our poet's " Four Books of Invectives against Physicians," a work in which he undoubtedly exposes a great deal of contemporary quackery, but which, at the same time, scarcely leaves the physician-hunter on higher ground than his antagonists.

In the last year of his life, Clement VI. wished to attach our poet permanently to his court by making him his secretary, and Petrarch, after much coy refusal, was at last induced, by the solicitations of his friends, to accept the office. But before he could enter upon it, an objection to his filling it was unexpectedly started. It was discovered that his style was too lofty to suit the humility of the Roman church. The elevation of Petrarch's style might be obvious, but certainly the humility of the church was a bright discovery. Petrarch, according to his own account, so far from promising to bring down his magniloquence to a level with church humility, seized the objection as an excuse for declining the secretaryship. He compares his joy on this occasion to that of a prisoner finding the gates of his prison thrown

open. He returned to Vauchuse, where he waited impatiently for the autumn, when he meant to return to Italy. He thus describes, in a letter to his dear Simonides, the manner of life which he there led.

“ I make war upon my body, which I regard as my enemy. My eyes, that have made me commit so many follies, are well fixed on a safe object. They look only on a woman who is withered, dark, and sunburnt. Her soul, however, is as white as her complexion is black, and she has the air of being so little conscious of her own appearance, that her homeliness may be said to become her. She passes whole days in the open fields, when the grasshoppers can scarcely endure the sun. Her tanned hide braves the heats of the dog-star, and, in the evening, she arrives as fresh as if she had just risen from bed. She does all the work of my house, besides taking care of her husband and children and attending my guests. She seems occupied with every body but herself. At night she sleeps on vine-branches ; she eats only black bread and roots, and drinks water and vinegar. If you were to give her any thing more delicate, she would be the worse for it : such is the force of habit.

“ Though I have still two fine suits of clothes, I

never wear them. If you saw me, you would take me for a labourer or a shepherd, though I was once so tasteful in my dress. The times are changed; the eyes which I wished to please are now shut; and, perhaps, even if they were opened, they would not *now* have the same empire over me."

In another letter from Vacluse, he says, "I rise at midnight; I go out at break of day; I study in the fields as in my library; I read, I write, I dream; I struggle against indolence, luxury, and pleasure. I wander all day among the arid mountains, the fresh valleys, and the deep caverns. I walk much on the banks of the Sorgue, where I meet no one to distract me. I recall the past, I deliberate on the future; and, in this contemplation, I find a resource against my solitude." In the same letter he avows that he could accustom himself to any habitation in the world, except Avignon. At this time he was meditating to recross the Alps.

Early in September, 1352, the Cardinal of Boulogne departed for Paris, in order to negotiate a peace between the kings of France and England. Petrarch went to take his leave of him, and asked if he had any orders for Italy, for which he expected soon to set out. The cardinal told

him that he should be only a month upon his journey, and that he hoped to see him at Avignon on his return. This good man, in fact, had kind views with regard to Petrarch. He wished to procure for him some good establishment in France, and wrote to him upon his route, "Pray do not depart yet. Wait until I return, or, at least, until I write to you on an important affair that concerns yourself." This letter, which, by the way, evinces that our poet's circumstances were not independent of church promotion, changed the plans of Petrarch, who remained at Avignon nearly the whole of the months of September and October.

During this delay, he heard constant reports of the war that was going on between the Genoese and the Venetians. The letter which Petrarch had written to the Doge of Venice, a year before, in order to persuade him to keep at peace with Genoa, has been already noticed. His prediction that both nations would reap only disasters from the war, seemed for some time to be falsified, for only some slight encounters had taken place. But, in the spring of the year 1552, their fleets met in the Propontis, and had a conflict almost unexampled, which lasted during two days and a tempestuous night. The

Genoese, upon the whole, had the advantage, and, in revenge for the Greeks having aided the Venetians, they made a league with the Turks. The pope, who had it earnestly at heart to put a stop to this fatal war, engaged the belligerents to send their ambassadors to Avignon, and there to treat for peace. The ambassadors came; but a whole month was spent in negotiations which ended in nothing. Petrarch in vain employed his eloquence, and the pope his conciliating talents. In these circumstances, Petrarch wrote a letter to the Genoese government, which does infinite credit to his head and his heart.\* He used every argument that common sense or humanity could suggest to shew the folly of the war, but his arguments were thrown away on spirits too fierce for reasoning.

A few days after writing this letter, as the Cardinal of Boulogne had not kept his word about returning to Avignon, and, as he heard no news of him, Petrarch determined to set out for Italy. He accordingly started on the 16th of November, 1352; but scarcely had he left his own house, with all his papers, when he was overtaken by heavy showers. At first he thought of going

\* For this eloquent letter, see De Sade, vol. iii., p. 257. Amsterdam edition.

back immediately ; but he changed his purpose, and proceeded as far as Cavaillon, which is two leagues from Vacluse, in order to take leave of his friend, the bishop of Cabassole. His good friend was very unwell, but received him with joy, and pressed him to pass the night under his roof. That night and all the next day it rained so heavily that Petrarch, more from fear of his books and papers being damaged than from anxiety about his own health, gave up his Italian journey for the present, and, returning to Vacluse, spent there the rest of November and the whole of December, 1352.

Early in December, Petrarch heard of the death of Clement VI., and this event gave him occasion for more epistles, both against the Roman court and his enemies, the physicians. Clement's death was ascribed to different causes. Petrarch, of course, imputed it to his doctors. Villani's opinion is the most probable, that he died of a protracted fever. He was buried with great pomp in the church of Nôtre Dame at Avignon ; but his remains, after some time, were removed to the abbey of Chaise Dieu, in Auvergne, where his tomb was violated by the Huguenots in 1562. Scandal says that they made a football of his

head, and that the Marquis de Courton afterwards converted his skull into a drinking-cup.

Matthew Villani has painted this pontiff's character in the blackest colours, and scarcely has shewn him that candour which is commonly afforded to Satan himself, namely, a confession of his abilities. He very faintly admits the talents and knowledge of Clement VI., yet he was perhaps as accomplished as any pope who ever filled the chair. De Sade, without defending his faults, places his virtues in a fair and striking light. Clement, it is true, did not always succeed in his political enterprizes; but, upon the whole, he was an adroit politician. He could not, to be sure, reconcile the kings of France and England, because the mania of international hatred, which has not yet subsided, was then in its youthful strength. But he succeeded in adjusting peace between the King of Hungary and the Queen of Naples, and he was near being equally successful in uniting the Greek with the Latin church. He also availed himself so well of Rienzo's errors as to bring the proud Tribune to Avignon, and to chain him by the foot.

It need not surprise us that his holiness never stood high in the good graces of Petrarch. He was a Limousin, who never loved Italy so much as



Gascony, and, in place of re-establishing the holy seat at Rome, he completed the building of the papal palace at Avignon, which his predecessor had begun. These were faults that eclipsed all the good qualities of Clement VI. in the eyes of Petrarch. A few days after the pope's death, he wrote to the Bishop of Cavaillon a letter, in which he says, " I send you three presents of a very different nature : the first is a fish of the colour of gold, with silver scales, which some call *Torrentona*, and others *Turtura*. The son of my domestic caught him in the beautiful waters of this fountain. The second is a flat drake, who has long been an inhabitant of its banks, but neither the air nor water could save him from the pursuit of my dog. The third is an epistle, which I fished up with the nets of my mind, in the waves where my soul swims amidst dangerous rocks. Have the goodness to keep the two first, and to return the last when you have had enough of it. You know my reason : truth begets hatred." The Bishop of Cavaillon sent back our poet's letter, saying that it had given him much pleasure—an approbation which shows his opinion of Clement to have been congenial with Petrarch's, for there is every reason to believe that this epistle was an invective on the pontiff's memory.

Petrarch, in the sixth of his eclogues, has, in the same manner, drawn the character of Clement in odious colours, and, with equal freedom, has described most of the cardinals of his court. Whether there was perfect consistency between this hatred to the pope and his thinking, as he certainly did for a time, of becoming his secretary, may admit of a doubt. I am not, however, disposed to deny some allowance to Petrarch for his dislike of Clement, who was a voluptuary in private life, and a corrupted ruler of the church. A proof of this was, that, after his death, the majority of the cardinals themselves felt the necessity for making some reform in the papal court. For a successor to Clement VI., they first turned their eyes on John Birel, the general of the Carthusian Friars. Cardinal Talleyrand, however, thought that this was carrying reformation to excess. He said to his brethren, "What are you going to do? don't you see that this monk, accustomed to govern anchorites, will wish to make us all live like them? He will oblige us to walk on foot like the apostles, and our beautiful horses will be sent to the plough."

This advice prevailed with the cardinals, and they chose for pope Stefano Alberti, Cardinal of

Ostia, who took the name of Innocent VI. He was born, in a village within the diocese of Limoges, of parents who were little known, and he owed his elevation entirely to his character for integrity and purity of manners, which caused it to be thought that he was capable of reforming the papal court by his example more than by his policy. In fact, in a short time, he did effect some reforms, and diminished ecclesiastical pomp and expense to an extent in which his prelates of the red hat were loth to follow him.

One might have expected Petrarch to have been pleased with this election. But no; the new pope was from Limoges, and, what was worse, he was a dull, common-place, and credulous man, who was so ignorant as to believe that Petrarch was a magician, because he took so much pleasure in reading Virgil. After Innocent's coronation, the Cardinals of Boulogne and Talleyrand wrote to our poet that he ought to come immediately and compliment his holiness on his exaltation. Petrarch obstinately refused to follow their advice.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXIV.

Petrarch sets out for Italy, and is persuaded by John Visconti to take up his abode at Milan—Church of St. Ambrogio—Condemnation of Petrarch's conduct by his friends—Inconsistency of his apologies to them—Arrival at Milan of Cardinal Albornoz with an Army, to recover the usurped dominions of the Pope—Character of the Cardinal—His reception by Visconti—Narrow escape of Petrarch from an Accident—Symptoms of a new Passion—Defeat of the Genoese by the Venetians, who force them to make a humiliating peace—Genoa submits to Visconti—Petrarch visits the Monastery of St. Columba—Guido Settimo and Socrates call at his house at Vaucluse in his absence—It is plundered and set on fire by Robbers—Petrarch wishes for a Benefice in the county of Avignon—Reply of the Emperor Charles to Petrarch's Letter—The Poet's Answer—His mention of Rienzo—The Venetians form a League against Visconti—Petrarch is sent to negotiate peace between Venice and Genoa—He is presented

with a Greek Homer—Petrarch finds the Venetians intractable — His Appeal to the Doge—Doria, the Genoese Admiral, ravages the coasts of Venice — Death of Dandolo, Doge of Venice — Naval Victory of the Genoese — Death of John Visconti — His Character — His Territories devolve to his three nephews, Matteo, Galeazzo, and Barnabo — The moment for their Inauguration fixed by an Astrologer — Character of the Three Brothers.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

EARLY in May, 1353, Petrarch departed for Italy, and we find him very soon afterwards at the palace of John Visconti of Milan, whom he used to call the greatest man in Italy. This prince, uniting the sacerdotal with the civil power, reigned absolute in Milan. He was master of Lombardy, and made all Italy tremble for his hostility.

Yet, in spite of his despotism, John Visconti was a lover of letters, and fond of having literary men at his court. He exercised a cunning influence over our poet, and detained him. Petrarch, knowing that Milan was a troubled city and a stormy court, told the prince that, being a priest, his vocation did not permit him to live in a princely court, and in the midst of arms. "For that matter," replied the archbishop, "I am myself an ecclesiastic; I wish to press no employment upon

you, but only to request you to remain as an ornament of my court." Petrarch, taken by surprise, had not fortitude to resist his importunities. All that he bargained for was, that he should have a habitation sufficiently distant from the city, and that he should not be obliged to make any change in his ordinary mode of living. The archbishop was too happy to possess him on these terms.

Petrarch, accordingly, took up his habitation in the western part of the city, near the Vercellina gate, and the church of St. Ambrosio. His house was flanked with two towers, stood behind the city wall, and looked out upon a rich and beautiful country, as far as the Alps, the tops of which, although it was summer, were still covered with snow. Great was the joy of Petrarch when he found himself in a house near the church of that Saint Ambrosio, for whom he had always cherished a peculiar reverence. He himself tells us that he never entered that temple without experiencing rekindled devotion. He visited the statue of the saint, which was niched in one of the walls, and the stone figure seemed to him to breathe, such was the majesty and tranquillity of the sculpture. Near the church arose the chapel, where St. Augustin, after his victory over

his refractory passions, was bathed in the sacred fountain of St. Ambrosio, and absolved from penance for his past life ; at the conclusion of which ceremony, the two saints broke out into a sacred canticle, expressive of their joy.

All this time, whilst Petrarch was so well pleased with his new abode, his friends were forming speculations on his conduct that were far from satisfactory. They were astonished, and even grieved, at his fixing himself at Milan. At Avignon, Socrates, Guido Settimo, and the Bishop of Cavaillon, said among themselves, “ What ! this proud republican, who breathed nothing but independence, who scorned an office in the papal court as a gilded yoke, has gone and thrown himself into the chains of the tyrant of Italy ; this misanthrope, who delighted only in the silence of fields, and perpetually praised a secluded life, now inhabits the most bustling of cities ! ” At Florence, his friends entertained the same sentiments, and wrote to him reproachfully on the subject. Boccaccio, whose letter has been already quoted, was particularly severe upon him. The prior of the Holy Apostles was entirely of their opinion ; but his veneration for Petrarch made his language more respectful.



Petrarch wrote to thank his friends for their concern about his liberty, but assured them that he was still free. There was, however, as I have observed, an inconsistency in his apologies. To some of his friends he justified himself, to others he acknowledged that he was in the wrong. To the latter he said, "You are right. I lay down my arms; I will not dispute with you; I confess to all that you have urged against me, and seek for no excuse. Man has not a greater enemy than himself, as St. Chrysostom says, in which he proves that we ourselves alone can do harm to ourselves. I have acted contrary to my genius and my wonted manner of thinking." To other friends he said, "You condemn me without listening to me. It was impossible for me to resist the importunities of so great a man as the Visconti. The requests of princes have greater force than their commands. Luberius said to Julius Cæsar, 'How can I refuse any thing to a man to whom the gods refuse nothing!'"

Levati, in his "*Viaggi di Petrarca*," makes so free with our poet as to ascribe his settlement at Milan to his desire of accumulating a little money, not for himself, but for his natural children; and

in some of Petrarch's letters, subsequent to this period, there are allusions to his own circumstances which give countenance to this suspicion.

However this may be, Petrarch deceived himself if he expected to have long tranquillity in such a court as that of Milan. He was perpetually obliged to visit the Viscontis, and to be present at every feast that they gave to honour the arrival of any illustrious stranger. A more than usually important visitant soon came to Milan, in the person of Cardinal Egidio Albornoz, who arrived at the head of an army, with a view to produce great changes in Italy. The princes of that country had so far availed themselves of the absence of popes and of their quarrels with the Emperors of Germany, as to possess themselves largely of the Roman church territory. Some powerful families had seized the Romagna, the Duchy of Spoleto, and even the patrimony of St. Peter. Pope Innocent VI. naturally desired to recover his dominions from these petty tyrants, and for this purpose he despatched as his legate the Cardinal Egidio Albornoz, the man whom he reckoned the ablest of all his colleagues to settle matters by war. Albornoz was descended from the royal race of Leon and Arragon. He

was still young when he obtained the archbishopric of Toledo. Neither his mitre nor his pastoral cares prevented him from waging war with the Moors: he was present at the battle of Tarifa, and in 1343 he directed the siege of Algeiras. On the death of Alphonso XI. of Castille, he received a cardinal's hat from Clement VI., having removed to the court of Avignon. Innocent VI. was too happy to find a purple captain so well qualified to conduct his troops.

The Cardinal Alborno entered Milan on the 14th of September, 1353. John Visconti, though far from being delighted at his arrival, gave him an honourable reception, defrayed all the expenses of his numerous retinue, and treated him magnificently. He went out himself to meet him, two miles from the city, accompanied by his nephews and his courtiers, including Petrarch. Our poet joined the suite of Galeazzo Visconti, and rode near him. The legate and his retinue rode also on horseback. When the two parties met, the dust, that rose in clouds from the feet of the horses, prevented them from discerning each other. Petrarch, who had advanced beyond the rest, found himself, he knew not how, in the midst of the legate's

train, and very near to him. Salutations passed on either side, but with very little speaking, for the dust had dried their throats.

Petrarch made a backward movement, to regain his place among his company. His horse, in backing, slipped with his hind-legs into a ditch on the side of the road, but, by a sort of miracle, the animal kept his fore-feet for some time on the top of the ditch. If he had fallen back, he must have crushed his rider. Petrarch was not afraid, for he was not aware of his danger; but Galeazzo Visconti and his people dismounted to rescue the poet, who escaped without injury.

The legate treated Petrarch, who little expected it, with the utmost kindness and distinction, and, granting all that he asked for his friends, pressed him to mention something worthy of his own acceptance. Petrarch replied: "When I ask for my friends, is it not the same as for myself? Have I not the highest satisfaction in receiving favours for them? I have long put a rein on my own desires. Of what, then, can I stand in need?"

After the departure of the legate, Petrarch retired to his *rus in urbe*; i.e., his half town half country house, at Milan. In a letter dated from

thence to his friend the prior of the Holy Apostles, we find him acknowledging feelings that were far distant from settled contentment. "You have heard," he says, "how much my peace has been disturbed, and my leisure broken in upon, by an importunate crowd and by unforeseen occupations. The legate has left Milan. He was received at Florence with unbounded applause: as for poor me, I am again in my retreat. I have been long free, happy, and master of my time; but I feel, at present, that liberty and leisure are only for souls of consummate virtue. When we are not of that class of beings, nothing is more dangerous for a heart subject to the passions than to be free, idle, and alone. The snares of voluptuousness are *then* more dangerous, and corrupt thoughts gain an easier entrance—above all, love, that seducing tormentor, from whom I thought that I had now nothing more to fear."

From these expressions we might almost conclude that he had again fallen in love; but, if it was so, we have no evidence as to the object of his new passion. Some writers of his life have pretended that his daughter Francesca was the fruit of an intrigue which he had at Milan with a young

lady of the name of Beccaria. But it has been already noticed, on sufficient biographical proofs, that his daughter was born at Avignon in the year 1343; so that she could not possibly have been brought into the world, ten years afterwards, during his residence at Milan.

During his half-retirement, at his *rus in urbe*, at Milan, Petrarch learned news which disturbed his repose. A courier arrived, one night, bringing an account of the entire destruction of the Genoese fleet, in a naval combat with that of the Venetians, which took place on the 19th of August, 1353, near the island of Sardinia. The letters which the poet had written, in order to conciliate those two republics, had proved as useless as the pacificatory efforts of Clement VI. and his successor, Innocent. The Genoese, inflated by their late successes, had become intractable. They raised up an enemy to the Venetians in the King of Hungary, who complained of the invasion of certain places that belonged to him in Dalmatia. But the Venetians interposed the mediation of the emperor, who prevented his son-in-law, the King of Hungary, from taking part in the war. Petrarch, who had constantly predicted the eventual success of Genoa,

could hardly believe his senses, when he heard of the Genoese being defeated at sea. He wrote a letter of lamentation and astonishment on the subject to his friend Guido Settimo. He saw, as it were, one of the eyes of his country destroying the other.

The courier, who brought these tidings to Milan, gave a distressing account of the state of Genoa. There was not a family which had not lost one of its members.

Petrarch passed a whole night in composing a letter to the Genoese, in which he exhorted them, after the example of the Romans, never to despair of the republic. But if they had read his encouraging epistle, it would have been, in all probability, as ineffectual as the efforts which he had made to persuade them to remain at peace. In point of fact, his lecture never did reach them. On wakening in the morning, Petrarch learned that the Genoese had lost every spark of their courage, and that the day before they had subscribed the most humiliating concessions in despair.

It has been alleged by some of his biographers that Petrarch suppressed his letter to the Genoese from his fear of the Visconti family. John Vis-

conti had views on Genoa, which was a port so conveniently situated that he naturally coveted the possession of it. He invested it on all sides by land, whilst its other enemies blockaded it by sea; so that the city was reduced to famine. The partizans of John Visconti insinuated to the Genoese that they had no other remedy than to place themselves under the protection of the Prince of Milan. Petrarch was not ignorant of the Visconti's views; and it has been, therefore, suspected that he kept back his exhortary epistle from his apprehension, that if he had despatched it, John Visconti would have made it be the last epistle of his life. But whether Petrarch feared the Visconti, or feared him not, it is difficult to see for what rational purpose he could have forwarded this letter to the Genoese. The morning after writing it, he found that Genoa had signed a treaty of almost abject submission. After such an event, his exhortation would have been only an insult to the vanquished; and there is not the slightest necessity for accusing him of withholding it from timid motives.

The Genoese were not long in deliberating on the measures which they were to take. In a few days their deputies arrived at Milan, implor-



ring the aid and protection of John Visconti, as well as offering him the republic of Genoa and all that belonged to it. After some conferences, the articles of the treaty were signed; and the Lord of Milan accepted with pleasure the possession that was offered to him.

Petrarch, as a counsellor of Milan, attended these conferences, and condoled with the deputies from Genoa; though we cannot suppose that he approved, in his heart, of the desperate submission of the Genoese in thus throwing themselves into the arms of the tyrant of Italy, who had been so long anxious either to invade them in open quarrel, or to enter their states upon a more amicable pretext. John Visconti immediately took possession of the city of Genoa. His deputy, Guglielmo Pallavicino, Marquis of Cassano, with 2000 horse and foot, made his entry into Genoa, on the 10th of October, 1353; and, after having deposed the doge and senate, took into his own hands the reins of government.

Weary of Milan, Petrarch betook himself to the country, and made a temporary residence at the castle of St. Columba, which was now a monastery. We there find him inditing a letter

to Guido Settimo, on the 20th of October. This mansion was built in 1164, by the celebrated Frederic Barbarossa. It now belonged to the Carthusian monks of Pavia. Petrarch has given a beautiful description of this edifice, and of the magnificent view which it commands.

Whilst he was enjoying this glorious scenery, he received a letter from Socrates, informing him that he (Socrates) had gone to Vacluse in company with Guido Settimo.

Guido Settimo had intended to accompany Petrarch in his journey to Italy, but a fit of illness prevented him; and, when he had recovered, the great heats rendered it impossible for him to fulfil his intention. Finally, the troubles of his native country, Genoa, deterred him from quitting Provence. From Avignon Guido set out one day, in company with Socrates, to visit the poet's house at Vacluse, though its master was absent.

Petrarch, when he heard of this visit, wrote to express his happiness at their thus honouring his habitation, at the same time lamenting that he was not one of their party. "Repair," he said, "often to the same retreat. Make use of my books, which deplore the absence of their owner, and the death

of their keeper (he alluded to his old servant). My country-house is the temple of peace, and the home of repose."

From the contents of his letter, on this occasion, it is obvious that he had not yet found any spot in Italy where he could determine on fixing himself permanently ; otherwise he would not have left his books behind him.

When he wrote about his books, he was little aware of the danger that was impending over them. On Christmas day a troop of robbers, who had for some time infested the neighbourhood of Vacluse, set fire to the poet's house, after having taken away every thing that they could carry off. An ancient vault happily stopped the conflagration, and saved the mansion from being entirely consumed by the flames. Luckily, the person to whose care he had left his house — the son of the worthy rustic, lately deceased — having a presentiment of the robbery, had conveyed to the castle a great many books which Petrarch left behind him ; and the robbers, believing that there were persons in the castle to defend it, had not the courage to make an attack.

As Petrarch grew old, we scarcely find him im-

proving in consistency. In his letter, dated the 21st of October, 1353, it is evident that he had a return of his hankering after Vacluse. He accordingly wrote to his friends, requesting that they would procure him an establishment in the Comtat. Socrates, upon this, immediately communicated with the Bishop of Cavaillon, who did all that he could to obtain for the poet the object of his wish. It appears that the bishop endeavoured to get for him a good benefice in his own diocese. The thing was never accomplished. Without doubt, the enemies, whom he had excited by writing freely about the church, and who were very numerous at Avignon, frustrated his wishes, and, considering the honest indignation of his language, it is wonderful that the knaves, whose profligacy he exposed, had not recourse to more savage means of revenge.

After some time Petrarch received a letter from the Emperor Charles IV. in answer to one, already noticed, which the poet had expedited to him about three years ago. Our poet, of course, did not fail to acknowledge his Imperial Majesty's late-coming letter. He commences his reply with a piece of pleasantry: "I see very well," he says, "that it is as difficult for your Imperial Majesty's de-

spatches and couriers to cross the Alps, as it is for your person and legions." He wonders that the emperor had not followed his advice, and hastened into Italy, to take possession of the empire. "What consoles me," he adds, "is, that if you do not adopt my sentiments, you at least approve of my zeal; and that is the greatest recompense I could receive." He argues the question with the emperor with great force and eloquence; and, to be sure, there never was a fairer opportunity for Charles IV. to enter Italy. The reasons which his Imperial Majesty alleges, for waiting a little time to watch the course of events, display a timid and wavering mind.

It is nothing surprising that Petrarch, upon paper, should have had the advantage of all the learned men about Charles of Luxemburg; and they must be supposed to have aided him in his letter to our poet; yet Petrarch, with all his sincerity and love of truth, sweetens his remonstrance with a fair share of flattery. A curious part of his letter is that in which he mentions Rienzo. "Lately," he says, "we have seen at Rome, suddenly elevated to supreme power, a man who was neither king, nor consul, nor patrician, and who was

hardly known as a Roman citizen. Although he was not distinguished by his ancestry, yet he dared to declare himself the restorer of public liberty. What title more brilliant for an obscure man ! Tuscany immediately submitted to him. All Italy followed her example ; and Europe and the whole world were in one movement. We have seen the event ; it is not a doubtful tale of history. Already, under the reign of the Tribune, justice, peace, good faith and security, were restored. And we saw vestiges of the golden age appearing once more. In the moment of his most brilliant success, he chose to submit to others. I blame nobody. I wish neither to acquit nor to condemn ; but I know what I ought to think. That man had only the title of Tribune. Now, if the name of Tribune could produce such an effect, what might not the title of Cæsar produce !”

De la Bastie, in his remarks on Petrarch, has erroneously stated, that, shortly after receiving this letter from Petrarch, the emperor hastened his departure for Italy. In point of fact, Charles did not enter Italy until a year after the date of our poet’s epistle ; and it is likely that the increasing power of John Visconti made a far deeper im-

pression on his irresolute mind than all the rhetoric of Petrarch. Undoubtedly, the petty lords of Italy were fearful of the vipers of Milan. It was thus that they denominated the Visconti family, in allusion to their coat of arms, which represented an immense serpent swallowing a child, though the device was not their own, but borrowed from a standard which they had taken from the Saracens. The submission of Genoa alarmed the whole of Italy. The Venetians took measures to form a league against the Visconti; and the princes of Padua, Modena, Mantua, and Verona, entered into the confederacy. The Florentines were invited to join it; but they had recently concluded a peace with John Visconti; and, though they might secretly wish to humble him, they were afraid of committing themselves to new hazards.

The confederated lords sent a deputation to the emperor, to beg that he would support them; and they proposed that he should enter Italy at their expense. The opportunity was too good to be lost; and the emperor promised to do all that they wished. This league gave great trouble to John Visconti. In order to appease the threatening storm, he immediately proposed to the emperor

that he should come to Milan and receive the iron crown ; while he himself, by an embassy from Milan, would endeavour to restore peace between the Venetians and the Genoese.

Petrarch appeared to John Visconti the person most likely to succeed in this negotiation, by his eloquence, and by his intimacy with Andrea Dandolo, who governed the republic of Venice. The poet now wished for repose, and journeys began to fatigue him ; but the Visconti knew so well how to flatter and manage him that he could not resist the proposal.

At the commencement of the year 1354, before he departed for Venice, Petrarch received a present, which gave him no small delight. It was a Greek Homer, sent to him by Nichola Sigeros, Prætor of Romagna. This worthy man had passed some time at Avignon, towards the end of the pontificate of Clement VI. He had been sent by the Emperor of Constantinople, in order to accomplish a union between the Greek and Roman churches. At that period, De Sade expresses his opinion that there was scarcely even the translation of a good Greek author to be found in Italy. He excepts a bad translation of Pindar, the author of which is scarcely known.



Petrarch wrote a long letter of thanks to Sigeros, in which there is a remarkable confession of the small progress which he had made in the Greek language, though he acknowledges his obligation to his teacher Barlaamo. "Homer," he says, "is mute to me ; or, rather, I am deaf to him. Nevertheless, I am glad to see him. I embrace the divine bard with a sigh, and say to him, ' Ah ! why can I not understand you ? ' " He begs his friend Sigeros, at the same time, to send him copies of Hesiod and Euripides.

A few days afterwards he set out on his embassy to Venice, towards the end of January, 1354. He was the chief of the embassy. He went with confidence, flattering himself that he should find the Venetians more tractable and disposed to peace, both from their fear of John Visconti, and from some checks which their fleet had experienced, since their victory off Sardinia. But he was unpleasantly astonished to find the Venetians more exasperated than humbled by their recent losses, and by the union of the Lord of Milan with the Genoese. All his eloquence could not bring them to accept the proposals he had to offer. He spoke in the council that had been nominated at Venice,

for the management of the Genoese war ; he had many private conferences with Andrea Dandolo, the Doge ; but, though Andrea was his personal friend, he found him as obstinate on the subject of peace as the rest of the Venetian aristocracy. The Venetians would not treat with Genoa while it was under the protection of John Visconti : and they had some reason for their dislike to do so ; for John had become a dangerous potentate after he had got possession of one of *the two eyes of Italy*. By treating with him, whilst he exercised the government of Genoa, they would have, in some measure, acknowledged him to be its lawful master. Petrarch completely failed in his negotiation, and, after passing a month at Venice, he returned to Milan full of chagrin.

Two circumstances seem to have contributed to render the Venetians intractable. The princes with whom they were leagued had taken into their pay the mercenary troops of Count Lando, which composed a very formidable force ; and further, the emperor promised to appear very soon in Italy at the head of an army.

Some months afterwards, Petrarch wrote to the Doge of Venice, saying, that he saw with grief

that the hearts of the Venetians were shut against wise counsels. With apparent inconsistency he is indignant, in the same letter, at the bare rumour that the emperor is about to enter Italy with his mercenary and barbarous troops. "Of all follies I know," he adds, "there is none so great as to seek for a hireling army, which is to come at our expense, and to destroy and assassinate us." He then praises John Visconti as a lover of peace and humanity; although he might have recollected that he (the Visconti) had, as well as his opponents, mercenary troops in his pay.

It is unfair, no doubt, to condemn any man's conduct without hearing his own explanation of it; yet, surely, at first sight, when we call to mind that Petrarch had implored the emperor to come into Italy, there appears to be a gross incongruity in his sentiments. Possibly he wrote his appeal to the Doge of Venice under the command or persuasion of John Visconti, in whose palace he was then living; yet even this supposition will hardly redeem him in our opinion.

After a considerable interval, Andrea Dandolo answered our poet's letter. He was very sarcastic upon him for his eulogy on John Visconti. At

this moment, Visconti was arming the Genoese fleet, the command of which he gave to Paganino Doria, the admiral who had beaten the Venetians in the Propontis. Doria set sail with thirty-three vessels, entered the Adriatic, sacked and pillaged some towns, and did much damage on the Venetian coast. The news of this descent spread consternation in Venice. It was believed that the Genoese fleet were in the roads; and the Doge took all possible precautions to secure the safety of the state.

But Dandolo's health gave way at this crisis, vexed as he was to see the maiden city so humbled in her pride. His constitution rapidly declined, and he died the 8th of September, 1354. He was extremely popular among the Venetians. Petrarch, in a letter written shortly after his death, says of him: "He was a virtuous man, upright, full of love and zeal for his republic; learned, eloquent, wise and affable. He had only one fault, to wit, that he loved war too much. From this error he judged of a cause by its event. The luckiest cause always appeared to him the most just, which made him often repeat what Scipio Africanus said, and what Lucan makes Cæsar repeat: "*Haec acies victum factura nocentem.*"

If Dandolo had lived a little longer, and continued his ethical theory of judging a cause by its success, he would have had a hint from the disasters of Venice that his own cause was not the most righteous. The Genoese, having surprised the Venetians off the island of Sapienza, obtained one of the completest victories that is on record. All the Venetian vessels, with the exception of one that escaped, were taken, together with their admiral. It is believed that, if the victors had gone immediately to Venice, they might have taken the city, which was defenceless and in a state of consternation; but the Genoese preferred returning home to announce their triumph, and to partake in the public joy. About the time of the Doge's death, another important public event took place in the death of John Visconti. He had a carbuncle upon his forehead, just above the eyebrows, which he imprudently caused to be cut; and, on the very day of the operation, October 4th, 1354, he expired so suddenly as not to have time to receive the sacrament.

Villani draws a harsh-featured portrait of this Lord of Milan. He accuses him of a dissolute life, ill becoming an archbishop. But De Sade re-

marks that we may well distrust this description. The Florentines naturally hated John Visconti, because he wished to subdue them. That he was fierce and ambitious, appears from his whole history. But Petrarch's more favourable account of him is much in accordance with the historians of Milan and other contemporary writers. They agree in stating that he treated all his obedient subjects with kindness, though he terrified the refractory, that he dispensed the most exact justice, and bestowed a great many charities. It is certain that he aspired to the entire command of Italy. How much happiness, however, he might have brought to Italy by becoming its entire sovereign, and by making it an hereditary monarchy, is now an insoluble problem. Italy, united under a common king, might have become dangerously powerful for the rest of Europe, or, by mismanagement, she might have sunk into a dependent power, as miserable as she is now, existing under the government of Austria.

John Visconti had three nephews, Matteo, Galeazzo, and Barnabo. They were his heirs, and took possession of his dominions in common, a few days after his death, without any dispute among themselves. The day for their inauguration was

fixed, such was the superstition of the times, by an astrologer; and on that day Petrarch was commissioned to make to the assembled people an address suited to the ceremony. He was still in the midst of his harangue, when the astrologer declared with a loud voice that the moment for the ceremony was come, and that it would be dangerous to let it pass. Petrarch, heartily as he despised the false science, immediately stopped his discourse. The astrologer, somewhat disconcerted, replied that there was still a little time, and that the orator might continue to speak. Petrarch answered that he had nothing more to say. Whilst some laughed, and others were indignant at the interruption, the astrologer exclaimed "that the happy moment was come;" on which an old officer carried three white stakes like the palisades of a town, and gave one to each of the brothers; and the ceremony was thus concluded.

The countries which the three brothers shared amongst them comprehended not only what was commonly called the Duchy, before the King of Sardinia acquired a great part of it, but the territories of Parma, Piacenza, Bologna, Lodi, Bobbio, Pontremoli, and many other places.

There was an entire dissimilarity among the brothers. Matteo hated business, and was addicted to the grossest debaucheries. Barnabo was a monster of tyranny and cruelty. Petrarch, nevertheless, condescended to be godfather to one of Barnabo's sons, and presented the child with a gilt cup. He also composed a Latin poem, on the occasion of his godson being christened by the name of Marco, in which he passes in review all the great men who had borne that name, a most infantine way of complimenting an infant.

Galeazzo was very different from his brothers. He had much kindness of disposition. He loved the chase, but he made it only an amusement. In war, he acted with courage and intelligence; but he preferred peace. Handsome and agreeable, he was a favourite with women, yet he never submitted to be a slave to their power. One of his greatest pleasures was his intercourse with men of letters. He almost worshipped Petrarch, and it was his influence that induced the poet to settle at Milan.

Unlike as they were in dispositions, the brothers, nevertheless, felt how important it was that they should be united, in order to protect them-



selves against the league which threatened them ; and, at first, they lived in the greatest harmony. Barnabo, the most warlike, was charged with whatever concerned the military. Business of every other kind devolved on Galeazzo. Matteo, as the eldest, presided over all ; but, conscious of his incapacity, he took little share in the deliberations of his brothers. Nothing important was done without consulting Petrarch ; and this flattering confidence rendered Milan as agreeable to him as any residence could be, consistently with his love of change.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXV.

Events at Rome — Francesco Baroncelli elected Tribune — Pope Innocent releases Rienzo, and appoints him Governor of Rome, with the title of Senator — Baroncelli murdered — Rienzo is accompanied to Rome by the soldiers of the Chevaliers Montreal — He attempts to bring the Nobles to submission — He puts to death a brother of the Montreals — Imposes new Taxes — Sedition at Rome — The People set fire to the Palace — Irresolution of Rienzo — He attempts to escape in disguise — Is taken and killed by the populace.



## CHAPTER XXV.

THE death of the Doge of Venice and of the Lord of Milan were soon followed by another, which, if it had happened some years earlier, would have strongly affected Petrarch. This was the tragic end of Rienzo. Our poet's opinion of this extraordinary man had been changed by his later conduct, and he now took but a comparatively feeble interest in him.

Under the pontificate of Clement VI., the ex-Tribune, after his fall, and after throwing himself on the mercy of the King of Bohemia, had been consigned to a prison at Avignon. It seems as if Clement was too enlightened and humane to meditate the death of Rienzo, in spite of all the charges of treason and heresy that were brought against him ; still he regarded him as a dangerous man, whom it was necessary to confine. Innocent, the

succeeding pope, thought differently from his predecessor. He feared the tyrants of Italy, and he considered it for the interest of the church that Rome should not be at their mercy. But the news from Rome continued to be worse and worse. Since the assassination of Count Bertolo of Ursini, no senator had been named. The city was in a state of anarchy, of which the neighbouring lords availed themselves to make war on each other, and to put every thing to fire and sword.

Francesco Baroncelli, secretary to the senate, was ambitious to take the place of Rienzo, though he was totally destitute of his eloquence and talents. He assembled the people by the sound of the bell of the Capitol; he harangued them, and proposed regulations for re-establishing the republic in good order. The credulous people commissioned him to execute his regulations, and gave him, as they had given to Rienzo, the title of Tribune.

Ugo of Arragon, whom the pope had sent to Rome as his Internuncio, gave his holiness an account of all that passed, and the pope wrote him the following letter, dated from Villeneuve, 15th September, 1353.

“ Seeking for a remedy against the evils of which you inform us, I think that nothing better can be done than to make use, on this occasion, of our dear son, Nicola Rienzo, the Roman knight, as we entertain hope that, having been instructed by adversity, he will renounce all his fantastic visions, and employ his great talents in repressing bad men, and in re-establishing tranquillity. We have caused him to be absolved from the penalties and censures which he has incurred, and we send him back, forthwith, to Rome delivered of his bonds.” The pope went even farther in Rienzo’s favour: he sent the Cardinal Albornoz into Italy, with an order to establish him at Rome, and to confide the government of the city to him under the title of senator. The cardinal, though he thought less of the ex-Tribune than his holiness, obeyed the injunction.

Meanwhile, the tribuneship of Baroncelli had been set aside; he had indulged in excessive cruelty, and met with a just reward in being assassinated. Rienzo wished to be as little dependant as possible upon the legate for the restoration of his power. He found at Perugia two brothers of the famous Chevalier de Montreal, who

had made so much noise by the bands of soldiers which they raised. Those brothers he persuaded to attach themselves to his fortunes, to lend him money, and to send him to Rome, accompanied with troops. His reception in the capital was compared to the triumphant entry of ancient Roman generals.

Being now established as senator of Rome, he began his measures by an attempt to bring the nobles to submission, and to make them take an oath of fidelity. He sent deputies to young Stefano Colonna, now chief of his family, since the death of his father and his brother John. But Stefano, shut up in his castle of Palestrina, treated Rienzo's messengers with indignity, and braved him by making excursions as far as the gates of Rome. In the mean time, Rienzo found himself embarrassed for want of money to support the war. It appears that, on his re-exaltation, his misfortunes had rather obliterated than improved the virtues which redeemed his faults. His treatment of Montreal, the brother of the men who had supplied him with troops and money, was scandalously ungrateful. This chevalier, more distrustful of Rienzo than his brothers, had followed the Senator

to Rome, that he might watch his conduct and keep him to his promises. Rienzo seized him, condemned him to lose his head, and, after his murder, laid hands upon a part of the treasure which he had amassed. This arbitrary act was followed by his putting to death, on unjust grounds, a Roman citizen, who was universally esteemed.

Impoverished by the war, and baffled in his efforts to reduce the castle of the Colonnas, Rienzo was obliged to send back his soldiers to Rome, having no money to pay them. In this dilemma, he imposed a new tax, to which the people would not long submit. On the 8th of October, 1354, a sedition broke out simultaneously in two quarters of Rome. The insurgents assembled with cries of "Long live the people, and death to Cola di Rienzo!" They advanced to the Capitol, where the Senator found himself suddenly abandoned by his guards, by his ministers, and by his servants. Only three friends remained with him: he had, however, caused the gates of the palace to be shut. The people set fire to the building; but the flames, having reached the staircase, barred that access against the assailants. Cola put on his armour of knighthood, took in his hands the standard of the



people, and, going up to the balcony of a higher hall, requested by signs to be heard with silence. His eloquence was such, that, if he had been listened to, he would, in all probability, have appeased the multitude. But they refused to hear him, and pelted him with stones, by one of which he was wounded in the arm. He retired into his palace.

Sallying forth once more, he attempted to harangue the people from the terrace of the Chancery, which was likewise open. There, however, his efforts to be heard were equally unavailing. It was evident that he was undecided between a glorious death and the hope of escape. He had at first put on his armour ; but he put it off again. A third time he resumed his armour, but only once more to disarm.

The palace was now forced, and the populace were occupied in pillaging the chambers which separated him from the conflagration. He stripped himself of every thing in his attire that he thought would cause his person to be recognized. He dressed himself like a doorkeeper, and, boldly passing through the places that were on fire, he spoke to the plunderers in the patois language of Rome. He told them that the place from which

he came was full of plunder. Thus he passed the two first gates and the first flight of steps without being recognized. But he was unable to clear the third gate, otherwise he would have been safe. There he was stopped by a Roman sentinel, who demanded where he was going. His courage now totally forsook him; he attempted no longer to conceal himself. He was conducted to the foot of the stairs of the Capitol, before the lion of Egyptian porphyry, where he had himself caused so many sentences of death to be recorded.

Still not one of the rioters had the courage to touch him; a profound silence succeeded their furious outcries. He, himself, with his arms crossed upon his breast, waited for the decision of his fate. Availing himself of the silence of the populace, he began to address them; when an artizan, Cecco del Vicchio, fearing the effect of his eloquence, plunged a rapier into his body. His example was followed by others, and the ex-Tribune soon expired. His head was cut off, and his body, covered with wounds, was dragged through the city.

Thus died a man who twice attempted to resuscitate the glory of the Roman name. The latter part of his career will for ever be discreditable to

him in history ; but, with a veil thrown over his crimes and follies, there is scarcely a character in the modern world more interesting than that of Cola di Rienzo.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXVI.

War between the Venetian League and the Milanese—Entrance of the Emperor into Italy—Petrarch writes to the Emperor, and is invited to meet him—Extraordinary Frost—Petrarch arrives at Milan—His Conversations with the Emperor—He declines to accompany the Emperor to Rome—Negotiation with the Lords of the Lombard League—The Emperor brings about a truce between the Genoese and the Venetians—His compromise with the Lords of Milan—His Progress to Milan—He is crowned with the iron crown—He leaves Milan, and proceeds to Pisa—Is invested with the sovereignty of that city, and receives the submission of the other cities of Tuscany—The Florentines do homage to him without surrendering their liberty—He proceeds to Rome, and is crowned there—He crowns Zanobi di Strata Poet-Laureate at Pisa—Sentiments of Petrarch and his Friends on that occasion—Sedition at Pisa against the Emperor—He returns to Germany—Petrarch's Letter to him—Publication of Peace—Execution of Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

WAR was now raging between the states of the Venetian League and Milan, united with Genoa, when a new actor was brought upon the scene. The emperor, who had been solicited by one half of Italy to enter the kingdom, but who hesitated from dread of the Lord of Milan, was evidently induced by the intelligence of John Visconti's death to accept this invitation; and thus a carbuncle and a surgeon influenced the fate of Europe. His imperial majesty, a little later than Visconti's death, in the month of October, 1354, entered Italy, with no show of martial preparation, being attended by only three hundred horsemen. He did not proceed to Venice, but passed on to Padua, which he reached on the 3rd of November; and there the Carraras gave him a magnificent reception. But Cane de la Scala, the Lord of Verona

and Vicenza, fearing that he might take possession of those two cities, would not allow him to enter them. On the 10th of November he arrived at Mantua, where he was received as sovereign. There he stopped for some time, before he pursued his route to Rome.

The moment Petrarch heard of his arrival, he wrote to his imperial majesty in transports of joy. "You are no longer," he said, "king of Bohemia. I behold in you the king of the world, the Roman emperor, the true Cæsar." The emperor received this letter at Mantua, and in a few days sent Sacromore de Pomieres, one of his squires, to invite Petrarch to come and meet him, expressing the utmost eagerness to see him. Petrarch could not resist so flattering an invitation; he was not to be deterred even by the unprecedented severity of the weather. The frost was so intense that, as the French say, it split stones. The oldest persons in Italy declared that they had never experienced so much cold. The roads were like crystal; the horses, though rough-shod, could scarcely keep their feet. Luckily, there fell a quantity of snow, which made the roads more passable, and Petrarch, profiting by the circumstance, departed from Milan

on the 9th of December. The snow was followed by so thick a fog, that objects around became undiscernible. Nobody was to be seen on the roads and fields; only at times some armed soldiers issued from their hiding-places; "but, as they belonged to the Lords of Milan," says Petrarch, "they did me no harm, though they caused me much fear."

After the first day's journey, he was obliged to sleep on the banks of the Chiosa, having arrived too late to pass the river. The following morning he wished to depart before daybreak; but his people murmured at being called up to expose themselves to a degree of cold that was scarcely supportable even in bed. On quitting the inn, the first person whom Petrarch met was the same Sacromore, the emperor's squire, whom his majesty had sent to him. He had left Cremona the night before, and had already travelled four leagues, wishing to be early at Milan, whither he was going to execute the prince's commands. After having asked him some questions respecting the emperor, Petrarch continued his route; but, with all the speed that he could make, he was not able to reach Mantua till the fourth day, the 12th of December.



The emperor thanked him for having come to him in such dreadful weather, the like of which he had scarcely ever felt, even in Germany. "The emperor," says Petrarch, "received me in a manner that partook neither of imperial haughtiness nor of German etiquette. We passed sometimes whole days together, from morning to night, in conversation, as if his majesty had had nothing else to do. He spoke to me about my works, and expressed a great desire to see them, particularly my *Treatise on Illustrious Men*. I told him that I had not yet put my last hand to it, and that, before I could do so, I required to have leisure and repose. He gave me to understand that he should be very glad to see it appear under his own patronage, that is to say, dedicated to himself. I said to him, with that freedom of speech which Nature has given me, and which years have fortified, 'Great prince, for this purpose, nothing more is necessary than virtue on your part, and leisure on mine.' He was struck by the freedom of my speech, and asked me to explain myself. I said to him, 'I must have time for a work of this nature, in which I propose to include great things in a small space. On your part, labour to deserve

that your name should appear at the head of my book. For this end, it is not enough that you wear a crown and a grand title; your virtues and great actions must place you among the great men whose portraits I have delineated. Live in such a manner, that, after reading the lives of your illustrious predecessors, you may feel assured that your own life shall deserve to be read by posterity.'

"The emperor showed by a smile and a serene countenance that my liberty had not displeased him. I seized this opportunity of presenting him with some imperial medals, in gold and in silver. In this collection there was one of Augustus, well preserved; Cæsar seemed alive on the coin. I said to his imperial majesty, 'Behold the great men whose place you occupy, and who ought to serve you as models. These medals are dear to me; I would not have offered them to another; you alone have a right to them. I know the heroes whom they represent. I know what they have achieved. For you it is not necessary that your majesty should understand their history; and yet it is necessary that you should imitate them.' I then gave him a short sketch of the lives of those worthies whose images I presented to him, throw-

ing in, from time to time, words calculated to excite him to follow their example. He seemed to listen to me with pleasure, and, graciously accepting the medals, declared that he never had received a more agreeable present.

“I should never end if I were to relate to you all the conversations which I held with this prince. He desired me one day to relate the history of my life to him. I declined to do so, at first; but he would take no refusal, and I obeyed him. He heard me with attention, and, if I omitted any circumstances from forgetfulness or from fear of being wearisome, he brought them back to my memory. I was perfectly astonished to find him acquainted with many little anecdotes of my life which I had forgotten. He then asked me what were my projects for the future, and my plans for the rest of my life. ‘My intentions are good,’ I replied to him, ‘but a bad habit, which I cannot conquer, masters my better will, and I resemble a sea beaten by two opposite winds.’ ‘I can understand that,’ he said; ‘but you are not answering my question. I wish to know what is the kind of life that would most decidedly please you.’ ‘A secluded life,’ I replied to him, without hesitation. ‘If I could,

I should go and seek for such a life at its fountain-head ; that is, among the woods and mountains, as I have already done. If I could not go so far to find it, I should seek to enjoy it in the midst of cities.'

"The emperor differed from me totally as to the benefits of a solitary life. I told him that I had composed a treatise on the subject. 'I know that,' said the emperor, with vivacity ; 'and if I ever find your book, I shall throw it into the fire.' 'And,' I replied, 'I shall take care that it never falls into your hands.' On this subject we had long and frequent disputes, always seasoned with pleasantry. I must confess that the emperor combated my system on a solitary life with surprising energy. He had the worst of the argument, to be sure, because he had the worse cause : but he believed that he had obtained the victory ; and he was vain of it. He requested me very earnestly to accompany him to Rome. 'I wish you,' he said, 'to accompany me thither. It is not enough for me to see that renowned city with my own eyes. I would see it with your's, which are better than mine. I shall also have need of you in several cities of Tuscany.' When he talked to me in this manner, he certainly

persuaded me that he had a heart and spirit perfectly Italian.

“Rome and Cæsar, I confess, were always my idols. To accompany Cæsar to Rome, nothing would be more to my taste; but several obstacles interposed; and this was the subject of a new dispute betwixt the emperor and myself, which lasted till we parted. He left no means untried to persuade me to accompany him. In short, I can take upon me to say that his Imperial Majesty has not treated any Italian with more kindness and familiarity than myself. Dyonisius, the tyrant, gave not a better reception to Plato.”

Petrarch remained eight days with the King of Bohemia, at Mantua, where he was witness to all his negotiations with the Lords of the league of Lombardy, who came to confer with his Imperial Majesty, in that city, or sent thither their ambassadors. The emperor, above all things, wished to ascertain the strength of this confederation; how much each principality would contribute, and how much might be the sum total of the whole contribution. The result of this inquiry was, that the forces of the united confederates were not sufficient to make head against the Visconti, who had

thirty thousand well-disciplined men. The emperor, therefore, decided that it was absolutely necessary to conclude a peace. This prince, pacific and without ambition, had, indeed, come into Italy with this intention; and was only anxious to obtain the two crowns without drawing a sword. He saw, therefore, with satisfaction that there was no power in Italy to protract hostilities by strengthening the coalition.

He found difficulties, however, in the settlement of a general peace. The Viscontis felt their superiority; and the Genoese, proud of a victory which they had obtained over the Venetians, insisted on hard terms. The emperor, more intent upon his personal interests than the good of Italy, merely negotiated a truce between the belligerents. He prevailed upon the confederates to disband the company of Count Lando, which cost much and effected little. It cannot be doubted that Petrarch had considerable influence in producing this dismissal, as he always held those troops of mercenaries in abhorrence. The truce being signed, his Imperial Majesty had no farther occupation than to negotiate a particular agreement with the Viscontis, who had sent the chief men of Milan, with

presents, to conclude a treaty with him. No one appeared more fit than Petrarch to manage this negotiation ; and it was universally expected that it should be entrusted to him ; but particular reasons, which Petrarch has not thought proper to record, opposed the desires of the Lords of Milan and the public wishes.

The negotiation, nevertheless, was in itself a very easy one. The emperor, on the one hand, had no wish to make war for the sake of being crowned at Monza. On the other hand, the Viscontis were afraid of seeing the league of their enemies fortified by imperial power. They took advantage of the desire which they observed in Charles to receive this crown without a struggle. They promised not to oppose his coronation, and even to give 50,000 florins for the expense of the ceremony ; but they required that he should not enter the city of Milan, and that the troops in his suite should be disarmed.

To these humiliating terms Charles had the weakness to subscribe. The affair was completed during the few days that Petrarch spent at Mantua. The emperor strongly wished that he should be present at the signature of the treaty ; and, in fact,

though he was not one of the envoys from Milan, the success of the negotiation was generally attributed to him. A rumour to this effect reached even Avignon, where Lælius then was. He wrote to Petrarch to compliment him on the subject. The poet, in his answer, declines an honour that was not due to him.

After the signature of the treaty, Petrarch departed for Milan, where he arrived on Christmas eve, 1354. He there found four letters from Zanobi di Strata, from whom he had not had news for two years. Curious persons had intercepted their letters to each other. Petrarch often complains of this nuisance, which was common at the time. The bearer of the present letters De Sade believes to have been Nicholas Acciajuoli, who had been sent by the king of Naples on certain affairs which shall, by and by, be mentioned. He had come to pass some days at Milan, but, unluckily, at the time when Petrarch was at Mantua. Arriving at Milan, Petrarch found Acciajuoli on the wing to depart, so that he had neither time to see him nor to write to Zanobi.

The emperor set out from Mantua after the festivities of Christmas. He had in his suite about



3000 cavaliers, who were disarmed according to the convention. The Viscontis ordered that all his expenses should be defrayed in their dominions, and that he and his suite should be furnished with whatsoever they wanted gratuitously. When he approached Lodi, he found Galeazzo Visconti, who had come to meet him. The Milanese prince conducted him to the palace that had been prepared for him; but, at the same time, he ordered the gates of Lodi to be shut behind his imperial majesty, and guarded.

Next day the emperor pursued his route, accompanied by Galeazzo. Dinner was prepared for them at the Abbey of Chiaravalle; and there they were met by Barnabo, who presented his majesty, in behalf of himself and of his brothers, with thirty beautiful horses richly harnessed. On their arrival at the gates of Milan, the emperor was invited to enter by the two brothers; but Charles declined their invitation, saying, that he would keep the promise which he had pledged. The Viscontis told him politely that they asked his entrance as a favour, and that the precaution respecting his troops by no means extended to his personal presence, which they should always consider an honour. The

emperor entered Milan on the 4th of January, 1355. He was received with the sound of drums, trumpets, and other instruments, that made such a din as to resemble thunder. "His entry," says Villani, "had the air of a tempest rather than of a festivity." Meanwhile the gates of Milan were shut and guarded with the same strictness as had been observed at Lodi. Shortly after his arrival, the three brothers came to tender their homage, declaring that they held of the Holy Empire all that they possessed, and that they would never employ their possessions but for his service.

Next day the three brothers, wishing to give the emperor a high idea of their power and forces, held a grand review of their troops, horse, and foot; to which, in order to swell the number, they added companies of the burgesses, well mounted, and magnificently dressed; and they detained his poor majesty at a window, by way of amusing him, all the time they were making this display of their power. Whilst the troops were defiling, they bade him look upon the six thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry, which they kept in their pay for his service, adding that their fortresses and castles were well furnished and garrisoned.

This spectacle was any thing but amusing to the emperor; but he put a good countenance on the matter, and appeared cheerful and serene. Petrarch scarcely ever quitted his side; and the prince conversed with him whenever he could snatch time from business, and from the rigid ceremonies that were imposed on him.

On the 6th of January, the festival of Epiphany, Charles received at Milan the iron crown, in the church of St. Ambrosio, from the hands of Robert Visconti, Archbishop of Milan. Matthew Villani pretends that the ceremony was performed at Monza; but he is certainly mistaken. Petrarch, the best witness who can be cited, saw the procession pass the door of his house, and assures us that the emperor was crowned in the church of St. Ambrosio.

On this occasion his Imperial Majesty created John Galeazzo, the son of Galeazzo Visconti, a Knight of the Spur. He conferred the same honour on Marco, the son of Barnabo. Both these new knights were under two years of age. The three Viscontis were declared Vicars of the Empire in all the territories which they possessed in Italy. They gave the emperor fifty thousand

florins in gold, two hundred beautiful horses, covered with cloth bordered with ermine, and six hundred horsemen to escort him to Rome.

The emperor, who regarded Milan only as a fine large prison, got out of it as soon as he could ; his impatience even made him lose his imperial gravity.

Villani says that " he traversed the states of the Visconti with the haste of a merchant who is hurrying to a fair." He did not feel at ease till he had got out of them ; then he began to breathe more freely. Petrarch accompanied him as far as five miles beyond Piacenzo, but refused to comply with the emperor's solicitations to continue with him as far as Rome. Whilst Petrarch was bidding his final adieu, a Tuscan chevalier who belonged to the emperor's suite took our poet by the hand, and, fixing his eyes upon the emperor, said to him, " This is the man of whom you have so often spoken ; he will rehearse your praises, if you deserve them ; but remember that he knows both when to speak, and when to be silent."

This anecdote gives us a beautiful conception of the freedom with which Charles permitted those who were attached to his person to speak to him ; but it is a pity that it has not reached

us through any other testimony than that of the self-complacent object of the compliment. It is found in the poet's Familiar Epistles.\*

The emperor arrived at Pisa on the 17th of January, 1355. Whilst he was at Mantua, the Pisans had sent to him deputies surrendering the city to his power, and imploring him to allow its government to remain as it was. They, consequently, rendered him all the honours which it is customary to offer to a sovereign potentate. But what was the terror of the Pisans, when, in the prince's suite, they beheld the troops of the Visconti with the horrific viper painted upon their standards! The emperor had the greatest difficulty to calm their fears.

Whilst his majesty was at Pisa, the greater part of the Tuscan cities sent him deputies to offer their homage and submission. The Florentines were much embarrassed when they saw him at their gates, on good terms, apparently, with the Viscontis, and his authority recognized by so many municipalities in their own neighbourhood. Extremely sensitive as they were towards any thing that could trench in the least upon their liberties,

\* Fam. L. 10. Ep. 2.

they not only abstained from submitting to the emperor, and acknowledging him as their sovereign, but they would not admit him within their city. They had still in their memory the sentences passed against them by the Emperor Henry VII., and they were fearful that his grandson might put them into execution. Those who were at the head of the government knew not what part to take. On Charles's first coming to Italy, they might have treated with him on equal terms ; but circumstances were now changed. The Viscontis had furnished him with money and troops ; and the empress had joined him with four thousand German cavaliers.

The Florentines sent to the emperor six of their principal citizens, to pay him homage in the event of his being willing to guarantee their freedom and privileges. Their instructions were to speak to this prince in a haughty tone, and to make him aware that they were not afraid of him. They addressed him as *M ost Serene Highness*, and spoke of his sacred crown, but without employing the terms customary in addressing an emperor. Both the style and matter of their harangue gave violent offence to Charles's courtiers and councillors.

But the prince himself, more wise and moderate,

perceived that it was against his interest in the present circumstances to break with a powerful republic which had so great an influence over Italy. Before his departure for Rome, he confirmed the rights and privileges of the Florentines, and annulled the sentences of his grandfather. In return, he received a hundred thousand florins, which they gave him after a good deal of higgling.

Petrarch much approved of the conduct of his countrymen in doing homage to the emperor without compromising their liberty. "I see with pleasure," he says, in a letter to Neri Morandi, "that the Florentines give his due to the King of the Romans, and that, at the same time, the love of liberty still reigns in my country."

When the Florentines paid the 100,000 florins for the preservation of their liberties, they were strangely ignorant that Charles had bound himself to the pope by an oath made in full consistory, nine years before, to hold sacred the rights of the Tuscan cities, so that treasures were now given for what ought to have been obtained for nothing. The rulers of the state were much ashamed when they discovered that they had paid so much money to his Imperial Majesty only to indemnify him for the

noncommission of perjury. But the chiefs of the republic succeeded each other so rapidly, that the new ones frequently forgot what had been done by their predecessors.

The emperor now looked forward with earnestness to his coronation at Rome. The pope, being unable to perform the ceremony himself, deputed the Bishop of Ostia to represent him, and gave him for an assistant the Legate Alborno, provided the affairs of his legation should permit him to go to Rome. At Pisa, in the following month, his Imperial Majesty and the Cardinal Legate had an interview, when the former paid Alborno all the honours that could have been rendered to the pope himself. The news of Charles's condescension seems to have put Petrarch into the worst possible humour. He writes to Neri Morandi: "I don't like those Cæsars from the north; their hearts have not the noble flame which I regard as the vital heat of the empire. What would the architect of our grand monarchy think if he saw his successor disputing humbly with a priest?"

The Cardinal Legate, at this time, invited Lælius, the friend of Petrarch, to join him at Pisa, which Lælius reached earlier than the Legate, because he



went by sea. He wrote to Petrarch before his departure from Avignon, and requested him to send to him at Pisa a letter of recommendation to the emperor. Petrarch complied with his request, extolled him to the skies, and procured for him a most favourable reception from the emperor.

A few days before his departure from Rome, the emperor wrote to Petrarch to consult him respecting a diploma which had been presented to him under the name of Cæsar and of Nero, the purporting to set Austria free from the jurisdiction of the empire. Petrarch, in his answer to the monarch, pointed out to him the evident marks of forgery which can be traced in this spurious document.

The emperor departed from Sienna the 28th of March, with the empress and all his suite. On the 2nd of April he arrived at Rome. During the two next days he visited the churches in pilgrim's attire. On Sunday, which was Easter day, he was crowned, along with his empress; and, on this occasion, he confirmed all the privileges of the Roman church, and all the promises that he had made to the Popes Clement VI. and Innocent VI.

One of those promises was, that he should not enter Rome except upon the day of his coronation, and that he should not sleep in the city. He kept

his word with the utmost punctuality. After leaving the church of St. Peter, he went with a grand retinue to St. John's di Latrana, where he dined, and, in the evening, under pretext of a hunting-party, he went and slept at St. Lorenzo, beyond the walls.

If we may credit a Bohemian historian, the Romans applied to him importunately to assume the sovereignty of Rome, and there to establish the main seat of his government. He replied that governments were not to be changed every day, and that they should remember their oath to the pope. From this epoch we may certainly date the total downfall of the emperors of the west in Rome, and the commencement of that of the popes.

Petrarch's indignation at the emperor's literal fulfilment of his promise to remain but a day at Rome is strongly expressed in one of his letters to Neri Morandi. "The successor of St. Peter," he says, "has not only permitted, but commanded the emperor to get out of Rome. With one hand he opens the temple, where he is to receive the Imperial crown, and, with the other, shuts against him the gates of the city, which is the capital and the seat of his empire."

The emperor arrived at Sienna on the 29th of April. He had there many conferences with the

Cardinal Alborno, to whom he promised troops for the purpose of reducing the tyrants with whom the Legate was at war. His majesty then went to Pisa, where he performed a ceremony that, we should think, was ill calculated to raise him in the good graces of Petrarch. Nicholas Acciajuoli, coming to Rome on some business from the court of Naples, had brought with him Zanobi di Strata, whom he introduced to the emperor as an orator and poet of the first order, and on whom he requested his majesty to confer the laurel crown. This favour was the more easily granted by Charles to the Grand Seneschal, since it cost him nothing; and, in the following month, he solemnly crowned Zanobi, in the cathedral of Pisa, before a noble assembly of princes and prelates.

“There were now,” says Villani, “two crowned poet laureates in Italy.” The historian speaks well of both of them, but allows that Petrarch had the more extensive reputation. Of Zanobi, indeed, no one at present knows what work worth remembrance he ever produced. In this appointment there might be no deliberate intention to insult Petrarch; but it certainly looked like tacitly discrowning him. Meanwhile, Acciajuoli, the Mæcenæ of the new laureate, was falling much in

public estimation, from the dissolute life which he led. Indeed, from Acciajuoli's treatment of Boccaccio, we may judge that he was a man of little worth. The Florentines had now come to think meanly of him, and they refused him the succours for Naples which he came to ask. Petrarch, in the nature of things, could not but be hurt at seeing a common-place person participating, if not usurping his laurels. The emperor, the seneschal, and the new laureate himself, were all ostensibly his friends, and prudence pointed out that he would only lower his own dignity by any shew of anger; but that he was stung by the circumstance there can be little doubt. He never after that period corresponded with Zanobi.

On this occasion, the Prior of the Holy Apostles says in a letter to Petrarch: "I reserve what I have to say to you about this phantom of a Cæsar until I have the pleasure of seeing yourself. You deplore his conduct in common with all sensible men. For me, I cannot forgive him for having laureated one of our citizens who troubled the fountain of Parnassus. He has turned his head by raising him to an honour that was not his due. His majesty was undoubtedly ignorant what injustice he did to you and to all the world."

Boccaccio had the same opinion with the Prior of the Holy Apostles about the crowning of Zanobi. He complains in one of his letters to Petrarch, that he gives him (Boccaccio) the title of poet. "I deserve not the name," he says, "having never had the honour of being crowned with laurel." "What!" replied Petrarch, "if there was no laurel, would it be necessary that the Muses should be dumb? Do you believe that one could not make very good verses under the shade of an oak or a beech tree?" Petrarch, speaking of this coronation in another letter to a friend, says: "A barbarous laurel adorns a head nourished by the Muses of Ausonia. A German censor dares to pronounce judgment on refined Italian spirits. Of a truth, this is not to be endured."

On the 21st of May, 1355, a sedition against the emperor broke out at Pisa, when he ran some risk of his life. The excesses of the insurgents appear to have been grossly exaggerated by some historians. There can be no doubt, however, that the circumstance completed his majesty's weariness of Italy, and made him hasten his departure. He left Tuscany on the 1st of June, with his empress and his whole suite, to return to Ger-

many, where he arrived before the end of the month.

Many were the affronts which he met with on his route. Cities through which he had to pass were shut against him; and at the gates of Cremona he was detained for two hours before the chief magistrate would admit him without his troops. He wished to have negotiated a peace between the Lords of Lombardy; but the Visconti told him that he might spare himself the trouble. Exasperated at this treatment, he recrossed the Alps, as Villani says, "with his dignity humbled, though with his purse well filled."

Lælius, who had accompanied the emperor as far as Cremona, quitted him at that place, and went to Milan, where he delivered to Petrarch the prince's valedictory compliments. Petrarch's indignation at his dastardly flight vented itself in a letter to his Imperial Majesty himself. "Ah, Cæsar," he says,\* "how ungrateful you are, and how little you know the value of things! That which your grandfather, and so many before him pursued through toils and slaughter, you have abandoned in an instant, and without an effort; though you had traversed Italy without an obstacle, though Rome had opened her gates to you; and you had grasped

a sceptre which cost you nothing. That sceptre you renounce to return to your barbarous country. I am well aware that it is difficult to force nature. I dare not say all that I would, and all that I ought to say to you. Your precipitous flight must have caused you a degree of chagrin, which I wish not to augment ; but I am bound to say that the empire groans at your conduct, and that it is applauded only by the wicked and rebellious. Go, then, whithersoever you please, but remember that no prince before you ever renounced a hope so beautiful, so attainable, and so honourable. Master of the Roman empire, you sigh for Bohemia. Your father and your grandfather thought very differently. Did not your father come into Italy to assert his rights, though he was not an emperor elect, like you, but only the son of an emperor ? Virtue is not hereditary, I well perceive. Not that any one disputes your knowledge of government, and your military talents, of which you have given so many proofs, but you are wanting in will, and are destitute of that emulation which is the source of all great actions."

Truly, if the emperor was chagrined at his own inglorious conduct, this was enacting the Job's comforter to console him.

“*Lælius*,” he continues, “has brought me your farewell, which struck me like the stab of a poniard. He has also brought me from you an antique coin, which bears the image of *Cæsar*. If this medal could speak, what would it not have said to prevent your shameful retreat! Compare what you have quitted with what you are going to pursue.”

A writer who has harshly criticised both the works and life of Petrarch, more than surmises that this bold epistle was, in reality, never sent to the emperor. He expresses his belief that our poet wrote many letters, and this, among the rest, which, when penned and polished, he discreetly restored to his portfolio, and were no more intended to reach the persons addressed, than his epistolary flourishes to *Cicero* and *Quintilian*. I must confess that the kindness subsequently shewn to him, both by the emperor and empress, make it seem most marvellous that they could forgive so unmeasured a reprimand. If Petrarch was a dauntless censor, Charles was a prodigy of gentleness in returning amity for such keen rebuke.

Shortly after the departure of the emperor, Petrarch had the satisfaction of hearing, in his own church of *St. Ambrosio*, the publication of a peace between the *Venetians* and *Genoese*. It was con-



cluded at Milan by the mediation of the Visconti, entirely to the advantage of the Genoese, to whom their victory gained in the gulph of Sapienza had given an irresistible superiority. It cost the Venetians two hundred thousand florins. Whilst the treaty of peace was proceeding, Venice witnessed the sad and strange spectacle of Marino Faliero, her venerable Doge, fourscore years old, being dragged to a public execution. Some obscurity still hangs over the true history of this affair. Petrarch himself seems to have understood it but imperfectly, though, from his personal acquaintance with Faliero, and his humane indignation at seeing an old man whom he believed to be innocent, hurled from his seat of power, stripped of his ducal robes, and beheaded like the meanest felon, he inveighs against his execution as a public murder, in his letter on the subject to Guido Settimo.\*

\* Marino Faliero succeeded Andrea Dandolo in the Dogeship of Venice. He was married to a young and beautiful woman, who was supposed to be unfaithful to him. A young man, named Michele Steno, who was expelled the Doge's house for some indecent liberties that he took with one of the ladies of Faliero's wife, wrote some atrocious verses on the very chair where the old man usually sat. Faliero prosecuted him, but could obtain no redress. Indignant at this treatment, he was himself accused of conspiring against the liberties of the republic: but, as Petrarch remarks, it was improbable that a man at his years should have thought of becoming a usurper.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXVII.

Petrarch invites Modio to Milan, to superintend his Son's Education, but Modio declines the offer—Illness of Petrarch—Death of Matteo Visconti — Petrarch receives a letter from Barbato di Salmone, addressed to the King of Poets—Troubles in Liguria —Proceedings of the Marquis of Montferrat — The King of Hungary threatens to attack the Visconti — Petrarch is sent by them on a mission to the Emperor — He finds him engaged in preparing the Golden Bull—Returns to Milan—His Eclogue on the Battle of Poitiers — He receives a letter from his friends at Avignon, and from Agapito Colonna—His Answers—The Bishop of Olmütz sends him the diploma of Count Palatine — Prerogatives attached to that dignity — Petrarch's retreat at Garignano—His letter to Guido Settimo, describing his habits and occupations.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

PETRARCH, since his establishment at Milan, had thought it his duty to bring thither his son John, that he might watch over his education. John was at this time eighteen years of age, and was studying at Verona. He was much attached to a young man of the name of Modio, whom he had known at the house of Azzo da Correggio, where Modio lived as secretary. Modio was clever and accomplished. Petrarch invited him to Milan to superintend the education of his son. It appears, however, that Modio declined the invitation, for his patron, Correggio, had been obliged to leave Verona in consequence of a revolution, by which his property was confiscated, and his wife and children thrown into prison. Modio was too generous to abandon him, but devoted himself to the education of Azzo's children. For this

noble conduct Petrarch ever afterwards esteemed him.

The September of 1355 was a critical month for our poet. It was then that the tertian ague commonly attacked him, and this year it obliged him to pass a whole month in bed. He was in this state when he learned the death of Matteo Visconti, the eldest of the three brothers, the lords of Milan. On the 25th of September, Matteo's servants entered his chamber, and found him dead in bed. The horrible debauches to which he gave himself up might account for his sudden death, but a rumour spread that he had been poisoned by his brothers, and it was either caused or aggravated by the frantic clamours of their mother, who openly accused her sons of fratricide. Villani says that he died a violent death like a dog, without confession. If he died of apoplexy, though that cannot be called a violent death, his face might wear the appearance of his having been poisoned, or forcibly suffocated. Petrarch, who had had but little connexion with the deceased, was not much affected by his death, but he was sensibly hurt by the reports that were circulated to the disadvantage of his friend, Galeazzo. With regard to Bar-

nabo Visconti, De Sade thinks that, if he did not commit the fratricide, he was at least capable of that or of any other atrocity, and quotes, as a sample of his cruelty, having roasted a priest alive in a red hot barrel.

Petrarch was just beginning to be convalescent, when, on the 9th of September, 1355, a friar, from the kingdom of Naples, entered his chamber, and gave him a letter from Barbato di Salmone. This was a great joy to him, and tended to promote the recovery of his health. Their correspondence had been for a long time interrupted by the wars and the unsafe state of the public roads. This letter was full of enthusiasm and affection, and was addressed to *Francis Petrarch, the king of poets*. The friar had told Barbato that this title was given to Petrarch over all Italy. Our poet in his answer affected to refuse it with displeasure as far beyond his deserts. "There are only two king-poets," he says; "the one in Greece, the other in Italy. The old bard of Meonia occupies the former kingdom, the shepherd of Mantua is in possession of the latter. As for me, I can only reign in my transalpine solitude and on the banks of the Sorgue."

Petrarch continued rather languid during autumn, but his health was re-established before the winter. At Christmas he had an opportunity of sending by a friend a letter to his dear Simonides. Simonides, in his answer, expresses the greatest joy at what he had heard, namely, that Petrarch projected going to Rome at the beginning of spring, and of passing through Florence, where he should see him. Petrarch replied that the commotions in Liguria would not permit him to make his projected journey to Rome, and that he should postpone it for a season.

The troubles in Liguria, of which our poet complains, arose from the following circumstances. John Paleologus, marquis of Montferrat, had been a strict friend of the Viscontis, but some offence which they had given him detached him from their party. The emperor having appointed him imperial vicar at Pavia, he leagued himself secretly with its governors, the house of Beccaria, enemies of the lords of Milan. At the commencement of winter, the marquis caused a revolt against Galeazzo of all the cities which he possessed in Piedmont. The Piedmontese put him at the head of their insurrection, and the emperor, though far

distant, secretly supported him. Galeazzo sent an army into Piedmont, at the head of the cavalry of which was Pandolfo Malatesta, a gallant and skilful officer, and an enthusiastic friend of Petrarch's; but the Milanese army ere long was deprived of his services by the cruelty of Galeazzo's brother, the monster Barnabo, who had taken some offence against him.

Whilst the war was raging between Milan and the Lombard and Ligurian league, a report was spread over Italy, early in the year 1356, which somewhat suspended the animosity of the belligerents. It was said that the King of Hungary was coming with a considerable army to make war upon the Venetians. It was added that he had formed a league with the Emperor and the Duke of Austria, who intended to invade Italy with the design of turning Tuscany into a monarchy. The Italians in alarm sent ambassadors to the king of Hungary, who declared that he had no hostile intentions, except against the Venetians, as they had robbed him of part of Selavonia. This declaration calmed the other princes, but not the Viscontis, who knew that the Emperor would never forget the manner in which they had treated him.



They thought that it would be politic to send an ambassador to Charles, in order to justify themselves before him, or rather to penetrate into his designs, and no person seemed to be more fit for this commission than Petrarch. Our poet had no great desire to journey into the north, but a charge so agreeable and flattering made him overlook the fatigue of travelling. He wrote thus to Simonides on the day before his departure. "They are sending me to the north, at the time when I am sighing for solitude and repose. But man was made for toil: the charge imposed on me does not displease me, and I shall be recompensed for my fatigue if I succeed in the object of my mission. The Lord of Liguria sends me to treat with the emperor. After having conferred with him on public affairs, I reckon on being able to treat with him respecting my own, and be my own ambassador. I have reproached this prince by letter with his shameful flight from our country. I shall make him the same reproaches, face to face, and viva voce. In thus using *my own* liberty and his patience, I shall avenge at once Italy, the empire, and my own person. At my return I shall bury myself in a solitude so profound that toil and envy

will not be able to find me out. Yet what folly !  
Can I flatter myself to find any place where envy  
cannot penetrate !”

Next day he departed with Sacromoro di Pomieres, whose company was a great resource to him. They arrived at Basle, where the emperor was expected ; but they waited in vain for him a whole month. “ This prince,” says Petrarch, “ finishes nothing ; one must go and seek him in the depths of barbarism.” It was fortunate for him that he staid no longer, for, a few days after he took leave of Basle, the city was almost wholly destroyed by an earthquake.

Petrarch arrived at Prague in Bohemia towards the end of July, 1356. He found the emperor wholly occupied with that famous Golden Bull the provisions of which he settled with the States, at the diet of Nuremberg, and which he solemnly promulgated at another grand diet held at Christmas, in the same year. This Magna Charta of the Germanic constitution continued to be the fundamental law of the empire till its dissolution. It contains, in thirty chapters, explanations concerning the qualities and prerogatives of the electors, and particularly the privileges of the king of Bo-

hemia; concerning the election and coronation of the emperor; concerning coins and tolls; concerning feuds, which attempts had been made in vain to check; and concerning the cities, the further increase of whose power, at the expense of the princes of the empire, they were desirous to prevent. The Golden Bull was first printed at Nuremberg, in 1474.

Many of my readers may not be acquainted with the origin of the term Bull, as applied to public ordinances: I shall, therefore, subjoin a brief explanation.

To documents of this kind was anciently appended by a string a seal enclosed in a case: this case was called *bullā*, and that term came in time to be extended to the document itself. It has been most commonly applied to ordinances issued by the popes on matters of more than ordinary importance. They are written upon parchment, and upon the rough side of it, in the Gothic character. The name and title of the pope comes first: for instance, “Gregorius Episcopus, servus servorum Dei.” Then follows a general exordium, from the first words of which the Bull is designated and referred to, as, “In cœna domini,” the famous ban

Bull of Urban V., in 1362, against heretics, which has been frequently repeated; "Unigenitus," the Bull of 1713, condemning Quesnel; "Dominus ac redemptor noster," the Bull suppressing the Jesuits; "Ecclesia Christi," the Bull carrying into effect the Concordat with France, in 1801; "De salute animarum," the Bull relative to the establishment of the catholic church in Prussia. To these bulls is appended a large leaden seal, impressed on the obverse with likenesses of the apostles, Peter and Paul, and on the reverse with the name of the reigning pope.

So early as the ninth century, the Byzantine and Frankish emperors used gold cases for their seals on important occasions, and several acts with this distinction are still extant. Thus also the rescript of Charles V. in 1551, restoring to the captive elector of Saxony, John Frederick, a portion of his former dominions, is accompanied with a gold case. Still the designation of Golden Bull has always been applied *par excellence* to the act of the German emperor Charles IV., described above.

Petrarch made but a short stay at Prague, notwithstanding his majesty's wish to detain him. The emperor, though sorely exasperated against the

Visconti, had no thoughts of carrying war into Italy. His affairs in Germany employed him sufficiently, besides the embellishment of the city of Prague. At the Bohemian court our poet renewed a very amicable acquaintance with two accomplished prelates, Ernest, Archbishop of Pardowitz, and John Oczkow, Bishop of Olmütz. Of these churchmen he speaks in the warmest terms, and he afterwards corresponded with them. We find him returned to Milan, and writing to Simonides on the 20th of September. Simonides concludes his answer by saying, "You ask me to find you a good housekeeper; I found one that would have suited you—a woman rather more than forty-five years old, cleanly, clever, with good manners and great skill in cookery, but I am sorry to say that I cannot persuade her to go to you. She objects to service, because she can maintain herself by her distaff."

Some days after Petrarch's return from Germany, a courier arrived at Milan with news of the battle of Poitiers, an ever-memorable battle, in which eighty thousand French were defeated by thirty thousand Englishmen, and in which King John of France was made prisoner. Petrarch

was requested by Galeazzo Visconti on this occasion to write for him two condoling letters, one to Charles the Dauphin, and another to the Cardinal of Boulogne. Both these letters had been published, before the time of De Sade, at Rome, having been copied from a MS. in the college library of the Jesuits in that city.

Petrarch was thunderstruck at the calamity of King John, of whom he had an exalted idea. "It is a thing," he says, "incredible, unheard-of, and unexampled in history, that an invincible hero, the greatest king that ever lived, should have been conquered and made captive by an enemy so inferior."

Most historians relate that the English, at Poitiers, amounted to no more than eight or ten thousand men; but, whether they consisted of eight thousand or thirty thousand, the result was sufficiently glorious for them, and for their brave leader, the Black Prince. It is singular, that in the accounts of this battle, no mention is made of cannon, though these new engines of warfare had been used ten years before, at Crecy. The modesty of the conqueror after his victory, and his courtesy to his royal prisoner, were not more

remarkable than the high sense of honour shewn by King John, who, when set at liberty four years afterwards, finding himself unable to raise the ransom which he had engaged to pay, voluntarily returned to London, where he passed the remainder of his life in captivity.

On this great event, our poet composed an allegorical eclogue, in which the king of France, under the name of Pan, and the king of England, under that of Articus, heartily abuse each other. The city of Avignon is brought in with the designation of Faustula. England reproaches the pope with his partiality for the king of France, to whom he had granted the tithes of his kingdom, by which means he was enabled to levy an army. Articus thus apostrophizes Faustula :

Ah meretrix obliqua tuens, ait Articus illi—  
Immemorem sponsae cupidus, quam mungit adulter !  
Haec tua tota fides, sic sic aliena ministras  
Erubuit nihil ausa palam, nisi mollia pacis  
Verba, sed assuetis noctem complexibus egit—

Ah, harlot ! squinting with lascivious brows  
Upon a hapless wife's adulterous spouse,  
Is this thy faith, to waste another's wealth,  
The guilty fruit of perfidy and stealth !  
She durst not be my foe in open light,  
But in my foe's embraces spent the night.

Meanwhile, Marquard, bishop of Augsburg, vicar of the emperor in Italy, having put himself at the head of the Lombard league against the Visconti, entered their territories with the German troops, and was committing great devastations. But the brothers of Milan turned out, beat the bishop, and took him prisoner. It is evident, from these hostilities of the emperor's vicar against the Visconti, that Petrarch's embassy to Prague had not had the desired success. The emperor, it is true, plainly told him that he had no thoughts of invading Italy in person. And this was true; but there is no doubt that he abetted and secretly supported the enemies of the Milan chiefs. Powerful as the Visconti were, their numerous enemies pressed them hard; and, with war on all sides, Milan was in a critical situation. But Petrarch, whilst war was at the very gates, continued retouching his Italian poetry.

At the commencement of this year, 1356, he received a letter from Avignon, which Socrates, Lælius, and Guido Settimo had jointly written to him. They dwelt all three in the same house, and lived in the most social union. Petrarch made them a short reply, in which he said, " Little did



I think that I should ever envy those who inhabit Babylon. Nevertheless, I wish that I were with you in that house of your's, inaccessible to the pestilent air of the infamous city. I regard it as an elysium in the midst of Avernus."

Some time afterwards, he received a letter from Agapito, the son of the younger Stefano Colonna, and nephew of the bishop and cardinal, whose education he had at one time superintended. De Sade confesses that he had not discovered what became of Agapito after he ceased to be our poet's disciple ; but he appears to have sunk under the adverse fortune of his family, and was now living in exile near Bologna, in a small house, and in scanty circumstances. His letter to Petrarch was in a bitter style, and contained the most unmerited reproaches. After thanking him for the pains which he had taken in his education, he says, " Fortune has raised you, and crowned you with affluence ; proud of your treasures, you despise a poor exile, fallen from prosperity, ill-clothed, and leading a miserable life in the suburbs of Bologna. You avoid me, and no longer think of me." It was easy for our poet to rebut these foolish charges. " I am neither rich nor poor," he replies to Aga-

pito. “ It is true that my income is a little augmented, but so is my expense in proportion, so that I can lay by nothing at the end of the year. You are poor, you say, which it astonishes me that a man of your name and merit can be. But if it be so, how can you suppose that poverty would make you despicable in my eyes? I have always had a particular regard for you. Is it possible that you could have really thought what you have written to me? Instead of accusing me of forgetting and despising you, you ought to attribute my silence to my indolence, which is well known, to my occupations, which increase, and to the scarcity of couriers. Adieu ! whether you are poor or rich, whether I write or remain silent, I am always your much attached.” Petrarch certainly had the better of the argument in this correspondence ; but he coolly omits offering his pupil any pecuniary assistance.

At this time, Petrarch received a diploma that was sent to him by John, bishop of Olmütz, chancellor of the empire, in which diploma the emperor created him a count palatine, and conferred upon him the rights and privileges attached to this dignity. These, according to the French abridger of the

History of Germany, consisted in creating doctors and notaries, in legitimatizing the bastards of citizens, in crowning poets, in giving dispensations with respect to age, and in other things.

Among the Franks, and afterwards under the emperors, the count palatine was the judge of the court. The sentences passed by ordinary judges came back to be confirmed at and reissued from his tribunal. At first there was only one count palatine judge, who was always in the suite of the prince. Afterwards, several more were created for the convenience of those who wished to make an appeal. These counts were besides governors born in the lands and domains of the prince, and were the receivers-general of his finances. The author of the Abridgment of German History confounds these latter counts with those of the palace of the Lateran. He assures us that the first example of the dignity of count of the palace of the Lateran being conferred by the emperor was in 1360; but Du Cange, in his glossary, quotes a diploma of this dignity which was given to Castruccio Castracani in 1328. Other instances might undoubtedly be found. Petrarch says that the emperor had deigned to admit him into the number of

counts palatine. There were, therefore, several of them, but they did not all perform the same functions. To this diploma sent to Petrarch was attached a bull, or capsule of gold. On one side was the impression of the emperor, seated on his throne, with an eagle and lion beside him ; on the other was the city of Rome, with its temples and walls. The emperor had added to this dignity privileges which he granted to very few, and the chancellor, in his communication, used very flattering terms. Petrarch says, in his letter of thanks, " I am exceedingly grateful for the signal distinction which the emperor has graciously vouchsafed to me, and for the obliging terms with which you have seasoned the communication. I have never sought in vain for any thing from his imperial majesty and yourself. But I wish not for your gold."\*

In the summer of 1357, Petrarch, wishing to screen himself from the excessive heat, took up his abode for a time on the banks of the Adda at Garignano, a village three miles distant from Milan, of which he gives a charming description. " The village," he says, " stands on a slight elevation in the midst of a plain, surrounded on all

\* De Sade, iii., 443.

sides by springs and streams, not rapid and noisy like those of Vaucluse, but clear and modest. They wind in such a manner, that you know not either whither they are going, or whence they have come. As if to imitate the dances of the nymphs, they approach, they retire, they unite, and they separate alternately. At last, after having formed a kind of labyrinth, they all meet, and pour themselves into the same reservoir." John Visconti had chosen this situation whereon to build a Carthusian monastery. This was what tempted Petrarch to found here a little establishment. He wished at first to have lived within the walls of the monastery, and the Carthusians made him welcome to do so ; but he could not dispense with servants and horses, and he feared that the drunkenness of the former might trouble the silence of the sacred retreat. He therefore hired a house in the neighbourhood of the holy brothers, to whom he repaired at all hours of the day. He called this house his *Linterno*, in memory of Scipio Africanus, whose country-house bore that name. The peasants, hearing him call the domicile *Linterno*, corrupted the word into *Inferno*, and, from this mispronun-

ciation, the place was often jocularly called by that name.

Petrarch was scarcely settled in this agreeable solitude, when he received a letter from his friend Settimo, asking him for an exact and circumstantial detail of his circumstances and mode of living, of his plans and occupations, of his son John, &c. His answer was prompt, and is not uninteresting. "The course of my life," he says, "has always been uniform ever since the frost of age has quenched the ardour of my youth, and particularly that fatal flame which so long tormented me. But what do I say," he continues; "it is a celestial dew which has produced this extinction. Though I have often changed my place of abode, I have always led nearly the same kind of life. What it is, none knows better than yourself. I once lived beside you for two years. Call to mind how I was then occupied, and you will know my present occupations. You understand me so well that you ought to be able to guess, not only what I am doing, but what I am dreaming.

"Like a traveller, I am quickening my steps in proportion as I approach the term of my course. I read and write night and day; the one oc-

cupation refreshes me from the fatigue of the other. These are my employments—these are my pleasures. My tasks increase upon my hands ; one begets another ; and I am dismayed when I look at what I have undertaken to accomplish in so short a space as the remainder of my life. God, who knows my good intentions, will assist me, if it be necessary for the good of my soul. Meanwhile, I watch, and find delight in the midst of the difficulties I encounter. \* \* \* I desire that posterity may know me, and approve of me. If I should not succeed in that ambition, I shall at least have been known to my age and my friends \* \* \* \* My health is good ; my body is so robust that neither ripe years, nor grave occupations, nor abstinence, nor penance, can totally subdue that *kicking ass* on whom I am constantly making war. I count upon the grace of Heaven, without which I should infallibly fall, as I fell in other times. All my reliance is on Christ. With regard to my fortune, I am exactly in a just mediocrity, equally distant from the two extremes \* \* \* \*

“ I have passed an olympiad at Milan, and I here commence the lustrum, a thing which neither myself nor my friends ever anticipated, nor could

have even believed, so true it is that we cannot make sure of any thing. The kindness which has been shewn me attaches me to Milan, not only to its inhabitants, but to its soil, its air, and its very walls, to say nothing of my friends and better acquaintances.

“ I inhabit a retired corner of the city towards the west. Their ancient devotion attracts the people every Sunday to the church of St. Ambrosio, near which I dwell. During the rest of the week, this quarter is a desert. Behold ! what this great saint, Ambrosio, does for me by his presence ! He gives my soul spiritual comfort, and he saves me from much ennui.

“ Fortune has changed nothing in my nourishment, or my hours of sleep, except that I retrench as much as possible from indulgence in either. I lie in bed for no other purpose than to sleep, unless I am ill. I hasten from bed as soon as I am awake, and pass into my library. This takes place about the middle of the night, save when the nights are shortest. I grant to Nature nothing but what she imperatively demands, and which it is impossible to refuse her.

“ Though I have always loved solitude and



silence, I am a great gossip with my friends, which arises, perhaps, from my seeing them but rarely. I atone for this loquacity by a year of taciturnity. I mutely recall my parted friends by correspondence. I resemble that class of people of whom Seneca speaks, who seize life in detail, and not by the gross. The moment I feel the approach of summer, I take a country-house a league distant from town, where the air is extremely pure. In such a place I am at present, and here I lead my wonted life, more free than ever from the wearisomeness of the city. I have abundance of every thing; the peasants vie with each other in bringing me fruit, fish, ducks, and all sorts of game. There is a beautiful Carthusian monastery in my neighbourhood, where, at all hours of the day, I find the innocent pleasures which religion offers. In this sweet retreat I feel no want but that of my ancient friends. In these I was once rich; but death has taken away some of them, and absence robs me of the remainder. Though my imagination represents them, still I am not the less desirous of their real presence. There would remain but few things for me to desire, if fortune would restore to me but two friends, such as you

and Socrates. I confess that I flattered myself a long time to have had you both with me. But, if you persist in your rigour, I must console myself with the company of my religionists. Their conversation, it is true, is neither witty nor profound, but it is simple and pious. Those good priests will be of great service to me both in life and death. I think I have now said enough about myself, and, perhaps, more than enough. You ask me about the state of my fortune, and you wish to know whether you may believe the rumours that are abroad about my riches. It is true that my income is increased ; but so, also, proportionably, is my outlay. I am, as I have always been, neither rich nor poor. Riches, they say, make men poor by multiplying their wants and desires ; for my part, I feel the contrary ; the more I have the less I desire. Yet, I suppose, if I possessed great riches, they would have the same effect upon me as upon other people.

“ You ask news about my son. I know not very well what to say concerning him. His manners are gentle, and the flower of his youth holds out a promise, though what fruit it may produce I know not. I think I may flatter myself that he

will be an honest man. He has talent ; but what avails talent without study ! He flies from a book as he would from a serpent. Persuasions, caresses, and threats are all thrown away upon him as incitements to study. I have nothing wherewith to reproach myself ; and I shall be satisfied if he turns out an honest man, as I hope he will. Themistocles used to say that he liked a man without letters better than letters without a man."

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXVIII.

Petrarch's daughter Francesca — Petrarch furnishes verses for the tomb of Andrea Dandolo — Comedy attributed to Petrarch — His Essay "De Remediis utriusque Fortunæ" — He returns to Milan — Receives a hurt from the fall of a large volume on his leg, which threatens a mortification — On his recovery he visits Enrico Capri, a jeweller of Bergamo—Capri's enthusiastic admiration of Petrarch—The Poet receives a visit from Boccaccio — The Empress informs him of the birth of a daughter — His pedantic reply—Mission of the Bishop of Cavaillon to Germany—Petrarch writes to him on his return, and recommends to him his friend Socrates—He is robbed by his son John — Hearty invitation from Albino, a physician — Petrarch leaves his house at St. Ambrosio, and settles in the Benedictine abbey of St. Simplician — His inquiry into the history of that Saint—His friend Guido Settimo is appointed Archbishop of Genoa — Pavia taken by the Visconti, who lay siege to Bologna — Mission of Acciajuoli to the Pope, who charges him to go to Milan, and negotiate a peace between

the Church and the Visconti—First personal interview of Petrarch with him — Galeazzo Visconti obtains the daughter of the King of France in marriage for his son—He sends Petrarch to Paris to compliment the king on his return from captivity in England — Wretchedness of France and its capital — On Petrarch's return to Milan he is invited to Prague by the Emperor, who sends him a gold cup — Christening of the Emperor's son Wenceslaus — English bull-dogs—The Plague again ravages Italy — Petrarch settles at Padua — Death of his son John — Marriage of his daughter Francesca — Pandolfo Malatesta—Petrarch receives a letter from his friend Simonides — His answer—Death of his friend Socrates—Petrarch sets out for Vaucluse, but is prevented from travelling by the unsettled state of the country — He receives a fresh invitation from the Emperor of Germany.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT this date of our poet's life, Squarzafighi, one of the best of his biographers, makes a strange blunder in telling us that Petrarch, whilst at Carignano, made acquaintance with a young lady of the house of Beccaria, and that his daughter Francesca was the fruit of an intrigue with her. But it is certain that our poet's sojourn at Garignano was in the year 1357; and it is equally certain that Francesca was married, and had a child in 1365; so that, according to Squarzafighi, she must have been a mother at seven years old. Petrarch passed the summer of this year much pleased with his village retirement; and, instead of courting Signorella di Beccaria, passed the intervals between his hours of study with the less loveable Carthusian monks. In the month of August, he received a letter from Benintendi, the chancellor of Venice, requesting

him to send a dozen elegiac verses to be engraved on the tomb of Andrea Dandolo. The children of the Doge had an ardent wish that our poet should grant them this testimony of his friendship for their father. Petrarch could not refuse the request, and composed fourteen verses, which contain a sketch of the great actions of Dandolo. But they were verses of command, which the poet made in despite of the Muses and of himself.

De Sade conjectures that it was during this retirement that Petrarch composed a comedy on the sacking of Cesena, which has been attributed to him. The subject of this piece, which, like Dante's description of hell, was entitled a comedy, was connected with the contemporary politics of Italy. The Cardinal Albornoz was at war with the usurpers of the States of the church, and had subdued them all but Francis Ordelaſſi, lord of Forli and Cesena. Ordelaſſi was absent from the latter city when his intrepid wife, Cia, conducted the defence of it in his absence. She wrote to her husband, "Defend Forli, and I will answer for Cesena." Albornoz, however, persevered; the place was taken at last, and many cruelties were committed. It is scarcely probable, however, that Petrarch was

the author of this piece, or of another, called *Medea*, which was ascribed to him.

In the following year, 1358, Petrarch was almost entirely occupied with his treatise, entitled, “A Remedy against either extreme of Fortune.” It was dedicated to his friend, Azzo Correggio. Of this work I shall have occasion to speak in a general conspectus of our poet’s compositions. His essay “*De Remediis utriusque Fortunæ*” made a great noise when it appeared. Charles V. of France had it transcribed for his library, and translated. It was afterwards translated into Italian and Spanish, but it has long ceased to be read.

Petrarch returned to Milan, and passed the autumn at his house, the *Linterno*, where he met with an accident, that for some time threatened dangerous consequences. He thus relates it, in a letter to his friend, Neri Morandi: “I have a great volume of the epistles of Cicero, which I have taken the pains to transcribe myself, for the copyists understand nothing. One day, when I was entering my library, my gown got entangled with this large book, so that the volume fell heavily on my left leg, a little above the heel. The next day the same thing happened. I did nothing but lift



it and put it back to its place; but at last this accident occurred so often, that I thought it my duty to place the volume on a low table, from which it could not fall. By some fatality, I treated the accident too lightly. I walked, I rode on horseback, according to my usual custom; but my leg became inflamed, the skin changed colour, and mortification began to appear. The pain took away my cheerfulness and sleep. I then perceived that it was foolish courage to trifle with so serious an accident. Doctors were called in. They feared at first that it would be necessary to amputate the limb; but, at last, by means of regimen and fomentation, the afflicted member was put into the way of healing. It is singular that, ever since my infancy, my misfortunes have always fallen on this same left leg. In truth, I have always been tempted to believe in destiny; and why not, if, by the word destiny, we understand Providence?"

As soon as his leg was recovered, he made a trip to Bergamo, which is seven or eight leagues from Milan. The occasion of his trip was this. There was in that city, Bergamo, a jeweller named Enrico Capri, a man of great natural talents, who would have taken a good station in literature, if

he had applied himself early enough to study. But, though advanced in years more than in learning, he cherished a passionate admiration for the learned, and above all for Petrarch, whose acquaintance he wished to make. Petrarch met his approaches kindly. The jeweller was out of his wits at his condescension; he spent a great part of his fortune in displaying every where the name and arms of our poet, whose likeness was pictured or statued in every room of his house. He had copies made at a great expense of every thing that came from his pen. The passion for literature grew so much upon him, that he shut up his lucrative shop, and frequented only schools of science and the society of learned men, of whom there was a considerable number at Bergamo. Petrarch candidly told him that it was too late in life to devote himself exclusively to letters. The man of jewels listened to him like an oracle on all other subjects, but persisted in shutting up his shop. He implored Petrarch to come and see him at Bergamo. "If he honours my household gods," he said, "but for a single day with his presence, I shall be happy all my life, and famous through all futurity."

Petrarch consented to visit him on the 13th of October, 1358. Enrico Capri came to take him at his word, and to bring him from Milan. The poet was received at Bergamo with transports of joy. The governor of the country and the chief men of the city received him with the highest honours, and wished to lodge him in some palace ; but Petrarch adhered to his jeweller, and would not take any other lodging but with his friend.

A short time after his return to Milan, Petrarch had the pleasure of welcoming to his house John Boccaccio, who passed some days with him. The author of the *Decamerone*, as I have already remarked, regarded Petrarch as his literary master. He owed him a still higher obligation, according to his own statement ; namely, that of converting his heart, which, he says, had been frivolous and inclined to gallantry, and even to licentiousness, until he received our poet's advice. He was about forty-five years old when he went to Milan. Petrarch made him sensible that it was improper, at his age, to lose his time in courting women ; that he ought to employ it more seriously, and turn towards Heaven the devotion which he misplaced on earthly beauties. This conversion is the subject

of one of Boccaccio's eclogues, entitled "Philotropos." His eclogues are in the style of Petrarch, obscure and enigmatical, and the subjects are muffled up under emblems and Greek names.

After spending with Petrarch some days, that appeared short to them both, Boccaccio, pressed by business, departed about the beginning of April, 1359. The weather was bad, the winds threatening, the heavens overcast with clouds, and the rivers overflowed. Petrarch, having attempted in vain to detain his friend, obtained his promise to write to him, when he should have crossed the Po.

Our poet was soon informed, by a letter from Simonides, that their dear Boccaccio had passed the floods and mountains safely, and had arrived at Florence in good health. The great novelist soon afterwards sent Petrarch a beautiful copy of Dante's poem, written in his own hand, together with some indifferent Latin verses, in which he bestows the highest praises on the author of the *Inferno*. At that time, half the world believed that Petrarch was jealous of Dante's fame; and the rumour was rendered plausible by the circumstance that he had not a copy of Dante in his library.\*

\* For this circumstance, Petrarch accounts very rationally.—*De Sade*, vol iii. 509.

It appears by his answer that he was vexed to see that Boccaccio had adopted the same idea. In this answer, Petrarch praises Boccaccio's enthusiasm, and does justice to the noble thoughts of Dante. De Sade thinks that Petrarch was one of six literary men who, at the request of John Visconti, wrote a commentary on the *Divina Commedia*.

In the month of May in this year, 1359, a courier from Bohemia brought Petrarch a letter from the Empress Anne, who had the condescension to write to him with her own hand to inform him that she had given birth to a daughter. Great was the joy on this occasion, for the empress had been married five years, but, until now, had been childless.

Petrarch, in his answer, dated the 23rd of the same month, after expressing his sense of the honour which her imperial majesty had done him, adds some common-places, and seasons them with his accustomed pedantry. He pronounces a grand eulogy on the numbers of the fair sex who had distinguished themselves by their virtues and their courage. Among these he instances Isis, Carmenta, the mother of Evander, Sappho, the Sybils, the Amazons, Semiramis, Tomiris, Cleopatra, Zenobia, the Countess Matilda, Lucretia,

Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, Martia, Portia, and Livia. The Empress Anne was no doubt highly edified by this muster-roll of illustrious women. It is to be hoped that she had a classical dictionary to help her in understanding it; though some of the heroines, such as Lucretia, might have bridled up at their chaste names being classed with that of Cleopatra.

Soon afterwards, Petrarch, having learned that his friend the Bishop of Cavaillon had returned to his diocese from a long journey which he had made in Germany, in the capacity of the pope's Nuncio, wrote to compliment him on his safe return, and to exhort him to take repose.

The commission with which the pope had charged the bishop was none of the pleasantest, and it was particularly disagreeable to Petrarch. It was to levy a tenth of all ecclesiastical revenues for the profit of the Apostolic chamber, for the recovery of lands which had been usurped. An assembly of the princes of the empire was held at Mentz, where the Nuncio was introduced to propose this demand. It naturally met with opposition. Some days afterwards, the Bishop of Cavaillon called upon the emperor and his lords,

who declared to him that the clergy of Germany could not give the subsidy that was demanded. "Sir Bishop," said the Emperor Charles to him, "why does the pope ask the clergy for so much money, instead of endeavouring to reform them?" The Nuncio, finding this opposition, made the best of his way back to Avignon.

In the same letter—a very free one—which he wrote to the Bishop of Cavaillon on this subject, Petrarch recommends particularly to his attention his friend Socrates, who was at that time at Avignon. A few days afterwards, he received a letter from Socrates, full of complaints of his own condition. "They persecute me in Avignon," says Socrates. "Your enemies, not daring to attack yourself, discharge their hatred against me. I can no longer hold out against their persecution. It would be hard at my age to quit my country, and to go wandering over the world." Petrarch's answer ended in a kind invitation to Socrates to come and live with him, and fix himself in Italy. His friend, however, had not the resolution to quit Avignon.

From the beginning of August, 1359, Petrarch wished to return to his country-seat at Linterno,

in order to keep himself cool during the dog-days ; but the war would not permit his removal. The Visconti were now eagerly pressing the siege of Pavia ; and the Marquis of Montferrat was making his best efforts to prevent that city from falling into their hands. His advanced parties came up to the very gates of Milan ; and it was unsafe to venture beyond them.

Petrarch, believing that the fear of the Milanese was greater than their danger, repaired to Linterno, on the 1st of October, 1359 ; but his stay there was very short. The winter set in sooner than usual. The constant rains made his rural retreat disagreeable, and induced him to return to the city about the end of the month.

He had scarcely come back to Milan, when an annoyance befell him, the more vexatious as it crossed his paternal affections. One morning, on rising, he found that he had been robbed of every thing valuable in his house, excepting his books. As it was a domestic robbery, he could accuse nobody of it but his son John and his servants, the former of whom had returned from Avignon. On this, he determined to quit his house at St. Ambrosio, and to take a small lodging in the city ;



here, however, he could not live in peace. His son and servants quarrelled every day, in his very presence, so violently that they exchanged blows. Petrarch then lost all patience, and turned the whole of his pugnacious inmates out of doors. His son John had now become an arrant debauchee; and it was undoubtedly to supply his debaucheries that he pillaged his own father. He pleaded strongly to be readmitted to his home; but Petrarch persevered for some time in excluding him, though he ultimately took him back.

One of our poet's friends, Albino, a physician, hearing what had happened, wrote to him, kindly soliciting him to come to his country-house at Canobio, situated at the foot of the Alps. It was said that the air of Milan was, at this time, infected, and that there reigned a kind of epidemic. "Come and be my guest," said Albino; "the air here is very wholesome, and you will always have with you a physician and a friend." Petrarch, in answer, thanked him for his invitation; but alleged that, at his time of life, it would be unseemly and useless too for him to fly from death, which will overtake us every where; that, unless he were detained by too many obstacles, it would give him

pleasure to see him at his country-seat, but rather as a friend than as a doctor; and he speaks of medical science as being useful, perhaps, in preserving health or curing slight indispositions, but inefficacious in great disorders, which puzzle and baffle the physician.

It appears from one of Petrarch's letters that many people at Milan doubted his veracity about the story of the robbery, alleging that it was merely a pretext to excuse his inconstancy in quitting his house at St. Ambrosio; but that he was capable of accusing his own son on false grounds is a suspicion which the whole character of Petrarch easily repels. He went and settled himself in the monastery of St. Simplician, an abbey of the Benedictines of Monte Cassino, pleasantly situated without the walls of the city. In a letter to Simonides, he extols the charms and conveniences of his new residence. "The house," he says, "is so situated that I can easily elude the visits of the troublesome by a back-gate. I have an extent of a thousand paces, where I can walk under shelter and cover. I might have a still more spacious walk if I chose to take the circuit of the city, and it would not be less solitary, for no one is to be

seen but in the wine-shops and the public place. In short, my solitude is such that I could believe myself in the midst of woods, if the sight of the city and the hum of its noise did not remind me of its vicinity. I fear not that St. Ambrosio will reproach me for having left him. I am ever with him in spirit, and my body has quitted him only to lodge with the father of St. Augustin—for so that saint used to call St. Simplician."

Petrarch was no sooner settled in this monastery than he was seized with a wish to be more particularly acquainted with the history of his canonized host. He asked one of the monks for a history of the life of St. Simplician. "They brought me," he says, "the work of a scholar without gravity, without interest, and without order." It was palpable that the author had drawn all that he says from the confessions of St. Augustin, but he has arrayed his materials confusedly, and in the dullest manner. "I threw away the book in anger, recollecting a good saying by a man of letters, 'that the glory of saints depends on the eloquence of their biographers.' The expression savours a little of heresy. The saints are not like the heroes of this world, whose names sink into oblivion, unless there

are able pens to hand them down to posterity ; but the names of saints, being written in the Book of Life, have no need of our pens. Their glory is in the hands of God. Simplician is a great saint, whose life deserved, undoubtedly, to have fallen into better hands. Had it been written in a polished and chastened style, what effect would it have produced ? Nothing, to be sure, for his glory ; but it would have reanimated the piety of his readers and their desire to imitate the saint. It appears, by the testimony of St. Augustine, that Simplician was all his life a true servant of God, and well skilled in all that concerns the Evangelical life. The intimate friend of Victorinus, rhetorician of Rome, who was afterwards a martyr, he encouraged him with power and success. St. Augustine came to consult him at Milan ; and Simplician contributed much to his conversion. Finally, in his old age, he was chosen to succeed St. Ambrosio by the suffrage of that holy man himself, who nominated him when dying ; and a worthy successor he proved. This is all that I know of mine host. God knows the rest."

Petrarch has here told, in a few words, all that is known of St. Simplician. His reflections on

hagiographers are very sensible, for no class of writers have wallowed so unconscionably in falsehood.

Guido Settimo, our poet's earliest friend, was this year appointed to the Archbishopric of Genoa. Petrarch wrote to congratulate him on his elevation. There is no steady happiness, however, in this world. Guido had reached the summit of his wishes, in this dignity, which brought him back in an honoured station to his native country, when he was suddenly attacked with a violent fit of the gout. He wrote to Petrarch, describing his sad condition; and, though boasting that he bore it with patience, soliciting his assistance to endure pain. Petrarch, in answer, regrets that he could not send him a copy of his remedy against either extreme of fortune, on account of the faithlessness of copyists, but, as a set-off against his friend's misfortune, dwells on his agony at the conduct and character of his son John, as if they were something sharper than twinges of the gout. Augustus, the happiest of mortals, complained that his blood had formed three vomit-nuts. "I have only one," says Petrarch, "and I should, therefore, be wrong to complain."

He was scarcely established in his new home at St. Simplician's, when Galeazzo Visconti arrived in triumph at Milan, after having taken possession of Pavia. The capture of this city much augmented the power of the Lords of Milan ; and nothing was wanting to their satisfaction but the secure addition to their dominions of Bologna, which, however, John of Olegia had given up to the Church, in consideration of a pension and the possession of the city of Fermo. The moment the Cardinal Legate took possession, it was signified to the troops of Barnabo Visconti that they must retire from the siege of the city, as it had been reannexed to the domains of the Church, but they received orders to press the siege more closely.

The pope wrote to several princes, both in and out of Italy, to demand their assistance, and among these to the emperor. The king of Hungary was the potentate who took his part with the greatest warmth. He sent ambassadors to Barnabo Visconti, who had the boldness to think his cause so just that he referred it to Avignon. It was tried there, and the decision, as might be expected, was against him. Barnabo, protesting against the

decision, continued hostilities, in defiance of the thunders of the Church.

This affair had thrown the court of Avignon into much embarrassment, when Nicholas Acciajuoli, Grand Seneschal of Naples, arrived at the Papal city, sent by his Neapolitan majesty, to request a revocation of the interdict which had been laid upon that kingdom for not paying the quit-rent imposed on its investiture. The Grand Seneschal was received by the pope and cardinals with the utmost distinction. At Lent, his holiness bestowed on him "the gold rose," a favour conferred only on the most eminent personages. He also made him Senator of Rome for life, Count of Romagna, and governor of the patrimony of St. Peter, charges which Acciajuoli accepted with the sanction of his sovereign. It is almost certain, as De Sade remarks, that Zanobi da Strada, who was secretary of the pope, and had gained his confidence, contributed much to the flattering reception of the Seneschal.

When Acciajuoli, on the eve of returning to Italy, went to take leave of the pope, his holiness requested that he would go by way of Milan, and there negotiate a peace between the Church

and Barnabo Visconti. The Neapolitan undertook the negotiation, though aware of the difficulties that attended it. He reached Milan at the end of May, very eager to see Petrarch, of whom he had heard much, without having yet made his acquaintance. Petrarch describes their first interview in a letter to Zanobi da Strada, dated from Milan. The Grand Seneschal visited our poet, and seems to have captivated him by his gracious manners. Those who remember a certain passage in John Boccaccio's biography will know how to appreciate the sincerity of Acciajuoli's benevolence.

With all his popularity, the Seneschal was not successful in his mission ; and his stay in Milan was but short ; for we find him at Bologna on the 12th of June. The impetuous Barnabo was at that place ; and when the Seneschal's proposals were read to him, he said, at the end of every sentence, "Io voglio Bologna."

Acciajuoli set out for Ancona to meet Cardinal Alborno, about the middle of June, but had the mortification to see hostilities going on between Barnabo's troops and those of the pope.

It is said that Petrarch detached Galeazzo Visconti from the ambitious projects of his brother ;



and that it was by our poet's advice that Galeazzo made a separate peace with the pope ; though, perhaps, the true cause of his accommodation with the Church was his being in treaty with France, and soliciting the French monarch's daughter, Isabella, in marriage for his son Giovanni.

The Milanese prince paid very dear for this honour—not less than 600,000 golden florins ; and Villani remarks that the king of France must have been reduced indeed, when he sold his own flesh and blood to the highest bidder. After this marriage had been celebrated with magnificent festivities, Petrarch was requested by Galeazzo to go to Paris, and to congratulate the unfortunate King John upon his return to his country. Our poet had a transalpine prejudice against France ; but he undertook this mission to its capital, and was deeply touched by its unfortunate condition.

If the aspect of the country in general was miserable, that of the capital was still worse. “ Where is Paris,” exclaims Petrarch, “ that metropolis, which, though inferior to its reputation, was, nevertheless, a great city ?” He tells us that its streets were covered with briars and grass, and that it looked like a vast desert.

Here, however, in spite of its desolate condition, Petrarch witnessed the joy with which the Parisians received their King John and the Dauphin Charles. The king had not been well educated, yet he respected literature and learned men. The Dauphin was an accomplished prince; and our poet says that he was captivated by his modesty, sense, and information. Petrarch offered advice to both these royal personages, to which they listened, he says, with profound attention. When it was time for him to return to Italy, he waited upon them, in the beginning of February, 1361. And here we find Petrarch, in his usual vein of self-complacency, dwelling on the king's unwillingness to let him depart, and on the Dauphin's grief because he would not stay. It does not appear that he met at the court of Paris with his old friend and patron, Cardinal Guy of Boulogne; otherwise, we should have had a few words about *him*, and about the good old cardinal's grief for Petrarch's departure.

It is evident that he had no great liking for the English; for, in his letter to Pierce le Bercheur, one of the most learned men at the court of France, which he wrote during his journey to Milan, he

says, that the inhabitants of Britain, who are called the English, were, in his youth, the most cowardly of all barbarians, inferior even to the vile Scotch; but he admits that, of late years, the English had become very warlike.

Petrarch arrived at Milan early in March, 1361, bringing letters from King John and his son the Dauphin, in which those princes entreat the two Lords of Milan to persuade Petrarch by every means to come and establish himself at their court. No sooner had he refused their pressing invitations, than he received an equally earnest request from the emperor to accept his hospitality at Prague.

At this period, it had given great joy in Bohemia that the empress had produced a son, and that the kingdom now possessed an heir apparent. His Imperial Majesty's satisfaction made him, for once, generous, and he distributed rich presents among his friends. Nor was our poet forgotten on this occasion. The emperor sent him a gold embossed cup of admirable workmanship, accompanied by a letter, expressing his high regard, and repeating his request that he would pay him a visit in Germany. Petrarch returned him a letter of grateful thanks, saying: "Who would not be astonished

at seeing transferred to my use a vase consecrated by the mouth of Cæsar; but I will not profane the sacred gift by the common use of it. It shall adorn my table only on days of solemn festivity." With regard to the Imperial invitation, he concludes a long apology for not accepting it immediately, but promising that, as soon as the summer was over, if he could find a companion for the journey, he would go to the court of Prague, and remain as long as it pleased his majesty, since the presence of Cæsar would console him for the absence of his books, his friends, and his country. This epistle is dated July 17th, 1361.

Notwithstanding the general joy that was felt at the birth of the emperor's son, Wenceslaus, an accident occurred at his christening which the piety of the times regarded as exceedingly ill-omened. The little heir made water upon his own baptismal font. The pope, the cardinals, and the whole court of Avignon, predicted that during the prince's future reign the most sacred things would be sullied by heretics.

Petrarch quitted Milan during this year, a removal for which various reasons are alleged by his biographers, though none of them appear to me

quite satisfactory. The cause may have been his love of change, and, possibly, some slights put upon him by his friends the Visconti. Towards *them*, our poet never affects to have been so prone to offer his advice and long orations as towards other potentates. The vipers of Milan would have been as deaf as adders to his declamations about liberty and the rights of Rome. The Milanese princes were anxious that he should reside in their city, and be a brilliant appendage to their court; but they would not permit him to interfere with their projects of aggrandizement.

Petrarch had now a new subject of grief to descant upon. The Marquis of Montferrat, unable to contend against the Visconti, applied to the pope for assistance. He had already made a treaty with the court of London, by which it was agreed that a body of English troops were to be sent to assist the Marquis against the Visconti. They entered Italy by Nice. It was the first time that our countrymen had ever entered the Saturnian land. They did no credit to the English character for humanity, but ravaged lands and villages, killing men and violating women. Their general appellation was the bull-dogs of England. What must

have been Petrarch's horror at these unkennelled hounds ! In one of his letters he vents his indignation at their atrocities ; but, by and by, in the same epistle, he glides into his bookworm habit of apostrophizing the ancient heroes of Rome, Brutus, Camillus, and God knows how many more !

The plague now again broke out in Italy ; and the English and other predatory troops contributed much to spread its ravages. It extended to many places ; but most of all it afflicted Milan. The nobles and court abandoned their capital, Galeazzo Visconti repaired to Monza, Barnabo shut himself in his strong castle at Manigno near Lodi, a place that was thought to be sheltered from pestilence by the dense woods around it. He had his retreat strictly guarded, allowing no one to approach it. A sentinel was placed in one of the towers, who had orders to ring the bell whenever he saw any one approaching on horseback. Some gentlemen entered the precincts of the castle without any one having heard the bell. Barnabo immediately sent orders to put the sentinel to death ; but they found him dead beneath the bell. This event so frightened our chieftain, that he went and hid himself in the thickest depths of the forest,

where he lived so sequestered as to cause a report of his death.

It is probable that these disasters were among the causes of Petrarch's leaving Milan. He settled at Padua, when the plague had not reached it. At this time, Petrarch lost his son John. Whether he died at Milan or at Padua is not certain, but, wherever he died, it was most probably of the plague. It would be injustice to Petrarch to suppose that he felt not this bereavement with the sensibility of a father, yet he confesses to his friend Guglielmo that the death of his son had delivered him from a great deal of trouble. John had not quite attained his twenty-fourth year.

In the same year, 1361, he married his daughter Francesca, now near the age of twenty, to Francesco di Brossano, a gentleman of Milan. Petrarch speaks highly of his son-in-law's talents, and of the mildness of his character. Boccaccio has drawn his portrait in the most pleasing colours. Of the poet's daughter, also, he tells us, "that, without being handsome, she had a very agreeable face, and much resembled her father." It does not seem that she inherited his genius; but she was an excellent wife, a tender mother, and a dutiful

daughter. Petrarch was certainly pleased both with her and with his son-in-law; and, if he did not live with the married pair, he was, at least, near them, and much in their society.

When our poet arrived at Padua, Francesco di Carrara, the son of his friend Jacopo, reigned there in peace and alone. He had inherited his father's affection for Petrarch. Here, too, was his friend Pandolfo Malatesta,\* who had been driven away from Milan by the rage and jealousy of Barnabo.

At Padua, in the same year, 1361, Petrarch received a letter from his friend Simonides, whom the grand seneschal had persuaded to accompany

\* Pandolfo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, Fossombrone, and some other places, was one of the bravest Condottieri of the fourteenth century. The Florentines placed him at the head of their troops against the Pisans in 1363, but discharged him on the suspicion of his aspiring to make himself master of the city. Jointly with his uncle and brother, he succeeded his father in the dominion of Rimini in 1364, and died in 1373. From an early period he had been a great worshipper of Petrarch's literary character, and, before they had seen each other, he sent from the other side of the mountains one of the best painters of Italy to take his likeness. The artist, however, was not thought to have succeeded in this portrait. Malatesta afterwards became acquainted with our poet at Milan, and had his likeness painted again in a better style.



him to Naples as his secretary ; and our poet seems to have thought it strange that his friend should have accepted the situation *without consulting him*. He rejected proffered places himself ; and thought that his friends were bound to follow his example. The good Simonides writes quite tremblingly to Petrarch, to inform him that he had yielded to the offers of Nicola Acciajuoli, and makes many apologies for not having consulted him on the step he had taken. He invites him at the same time to come and join him at Naples. He describes the deliciousness of the country which surrounded the luxurious mansion of the grand seneschal. "It is a country," he says, "made for poets by nature and by art. You would find every thing that can flatter the senses conveyed by sea or by land."

But, though Acciajuoli added his own intreaties to those of Simonides, Petrarch would not accept the invitation. And here comes in again another token of Petrarch's self-complacency, in his answer to Simonides :—"You are not weary," he says, "of inviting me ; though I am weary of declining your pressing invitations. I cannot repeat all my reasons for doing so, after having stated them a thousand times." He then tells his friend of the in-

numerable invitations which he had received from other quarters, particularly from the emperor, and the King of France, "but nothing," he adds, "would ever induce him to abandon his beloved Italy."

Unfortunately we cannot forget Petrarch's assurances by letter to his emperor that he would soon visit him. He had written to the emperor, saying that he would repair to his court, and remain there as long as his majesty chose.

The plague, which still continued to infest southern Europe in 1362, had even in the preceding year deprived our poet of his beloved friend Socrates, who died at Avignon. "He was," says Petrarch, "of all men the dearest to my heart. His sentiments towards me never varied during an acquaintance of thirty-one years." He adds, with his characteristic partiality to Italy:—"It was astonishing that such a man should have been born amidst barbarians; but the habit of living with me and my society and friendship had inspired him with such a taste for our manners and opinions, that he had become a perfect Italian."

The plague and war rendered Italy at this time so disagreeable to Petrarch, that he resolved on

returning to Vacluse. He, therefore, set out from Padua for Milan, on the 10th of January, 1362, reckoning that when the cold weather was over he might depart from the latter place on his route to Avignon. But when he reached Milan, he found that the state of the country would not permit him to proceed to the Alps. Barnabo Visconti had come out of his den, and again attacked Bologna. The plague had enriched his coffers, because he took possession of the estates and wealth of those who died without heirs. Prouder than ever, he made exorbitant demands upon the pope, who was engaged in a league with several Italian princes against him. Barnabo said about this coalition — “They are children, I shall have them well whipt.”

The emperor of Germany now sent Petrarch a third letter of invitation to come and see him, which our poet promised to accept ; but alleged that he was prevented by the impossibility of getting a safe passage. Boccaccio, hearing that Petrarch meditated a journey to the far North, was much alarmed, and reproached him for his intention of dragging the Muses into Sarmatia, when Italy was the true Parnassus ; but, as I have quoted this letter in my notice of Boccaccio, I need not here repeat its contents.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXIX.

Petrarch leaves Padua, and removes to Venice on account of the Plague—He makes a present of his Library to the Republic of Venice — The Government assigns a Palace for his residence—Death of Pope Innocent VI.—Election of Urban V. —Death of Azzo Correggio—Petrarch is visited by Boccaccio, who introduces to him Leontio Pilato — Death of his friends, Lælius and Simonides—Death of Leontio Pilato—Anecdote of Lorenzo Celso, Doge of Venice — Petrarch visits Bologna — Decay of that city—Venetian Expedition to Candia—Petrarch's Letter to Boccaccio on the Jongleurs of Italy — His summary proceeding with an Atheist — Proposal of his countrymen to recall him to Florence—Birth of his Grandson—His Letter of Advice to Pope Urban V.—His entrance into his Sixty-Third Year—Removal of the Pope to Rome—His enmity against the Visconti—Marriage of the Duke of Clarence to the Daughter of Galeazzo Visconti—Froissart—Death of Petrarch's Grandson—He travels by water to Padua — Interview between the Emperor and the Pope at Rome—Petrarch is attacked by Fever

—He makes his Will—He sets out for Rome—Is seized with a fit at Ferrara, and supposed to be dead — Nicholas d'Este and his Brother Ugo—Petrarch is obliged by illness to return to Padua—He retires to the village of Argua for the benefit of his health, and fixes himself there—Real Cause of his Dislike of Venice—Infidelity prevailing there— His continued Illness —Return of the Pope to Avignon—His Death—His Miracles— Rogero, Nephew of Clement VI., elected his Successor—Letter from Petrarch to Francesco Bruin on the State of his Affairs— His Letter to Cardinal Cabassole on his Illness—The Cardinal is sent as Governor to Perugia—Petrarch conceives an enmity for the Cardinal of Boulogne — His Letter to Cardinal Cabassole.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

IN the month of June, 1362, the plague, which had began its ravages at Padua, chased Petrarch from that place, and he took the resolution of establishing himself at Venice, which it had not reached. The course of the pestilence, like that of the cholera, was not general, but unaccountably capricious. Villani says that it acted like hail, which will desolate fields to the right and left, whilst it spares those in the middle. The war had not permitted our poet to travel either to Avignon or into Germany. The plague had driven him out of Milan and Padua. "I am not flying from death," he said, "but seeking repose."

Having resolved to repair to Venice, Petrarch as usual took his books along with him. From one of his letters to Boccaccio, it appears that it was his intention to bestow his library on some reli-

gious community, but, soon after his arrival at Venice, he conceived the idea of offering this treasure to the Venetian Republic. He wrote to the government that he wished the blessed Evangelist, St. Mark, to be the heir of those books, on condition that they should all be placed in safety, that they should neither be sold nor separated, and that they should be sheltered from fire and water, and carefully preserved for the use and amusement of the learned and noble in Venice. He expressed his hopes, at the same time, that the illustrious city would acquire other trusts of the same kind for the good of the public, and that the citizens who loved their country, the nobles above all, and even strangers, would follow his example in bequeathing books to the church of St. Mark, which might one day contain a great collection similar to those of the ancients.

The procurators of the church of St. Mark having offered to defray the expence of lodging and preserving his library, the republic decreed that our poet's offer did honour to the Venetian state. They assigned to Petrarch for his own residence a large palace, called the Two Towers, formerly belonging to the family of Molina. The

mansion was very lofty, and commanded a prospect of the harbour. Our poet took great pleasure in this view, and describes it with vivid interest. "From this port," he says, "I see vessels departing, which are as large as the house I inhabit, and which have masts taller than its towers. These ships resemble a mountain floating on the sea; they go to all parts of the world amidst a thousand dangers; they carry our wines to the English, our honey to the Scythians, our saffron, our oils, and our linen to the Syrians, Armenians, Persians, and Arabians; and, wonderful to say, convey our wood to the Greeks and Egyptians. From all these countries they bring back in return articles of merchandize, which they diffuse over all Europe. They go even as far as the Tanais. The navigation of our seas does not extend farther north; but, when they have arrived there, they quit their vessels, and travel on to trade with India and China; and, after passing the Caucasus and the Ganges, they proceed as far as the eastern ocean."

It is natural to suppose that Petrarch took all proper precautions for the preservation of his books; nevertheless, they are not now to be seen at Venice. Tomasini tells us that they had been placed at the



top of the church of St. Mark, that he demanded a sight of them, but that he found them almost entirely spoiled, and some of them even petrified.

Whilst Petrarch was forming his new establishment at Venice, the news arrived that Pope Innocent VI. had died on the 12th of September. "He was a good, just, and simple man," says the continuator of Nangis. A simple man he certainly was, for he believed Petrarch to be a sorcerer on account of his reading Virgil. Innocent was succeeded in the pontificate, to the surprise of all the world, by William Grimoard, abbot of St. Victor at Marseilles, who took the title of Urban V. The cardinals chose him, though he was not of their sacred college, from their jealousy lest a pope should be elected from the opposite party of their own body. Petrarch rejoiced at his election, and ascribed it to the direct interference of Heaven. De Sade says that the new pope desired Petrarch to be the apostolic secretary, but that he was not to be tempted by a gilded chain.

About this time Petrarch received news of the death of Azzo Correggio, one of his dearest friends, whose widow and children wrote to him on this

occasion, the latter telling him that they regarded him as a father. Petrarch says that his only consolation for the loss of Azzo was that death had nothing farther of which it could rob him.

This was an exaggerated tone of pathos, for, besides Lælius, he had still his friend Boccaccio, a host in himself, and equal in value to any friend that he ever possessed. Boccaccio came to Venice to see Petrarch in 1363, and their meeting was joyous. Boccaccio brought with him a very singular personage, a Greek of Thessalonica, named Leontio Pilato, whose portrait is thus traced by our poet. "His aspect is frightful, his visage is hideous. He has very long and black hair, that is ill-combed. He is immersed in constant meditation; but, on the other hand, he is profound in the Greek language, which he learned from Barlaamo, the Calabrian. Of Latin he has but a slight tincture. In Italy he calls himself a Greek, and in Greece an Italian, persuaded that in both countries it is honourable to pass for a foreigner."

Petrarch and Boccaccio spent delightfully together the months of June, July, and August, 1363. Boccaccio had not long left him, when, in the following year, our poet heard of the death of

his friend, Lælius, and his tears were still fresh for his loss, when he received another shock in being bereft of Simonides. It requires a certain age and degree of experience to appreciate this kind of calamity, when we feel the desolation of losing our accustomed friends, and almost wish ourselves out of life that we may escape from its solitude. Boccaccio returned to Florence, early in September, 1363. His departure was soon afterwards followed by that of Leontio Pilato, who embarked at Venice for Constantinople. Petrarch would have willingly detained this wayward being for the sake of his tuition in Greek, if he had been a less disgusting character: but his gloomy temper made him at last intolerable to our poet as to every one else. He got back to Greece, quarrelled with every body, and could not be quiet any where. He subsequently repented of having left Italy, and wrote to Petrarch, begging that he would receive him once more into his house, which the other refused, having had quite enough of Leontio's personal dirtiness and disagreeable manners. The vagrant, however, thought that he could take Petrarch's hospitality by storm. He embarked for Italy; the vessel was overtaken by a tempest, and

nearly foundered. In this extreme peril, Leontio bound himself to the mast, but a flash of lightning struck him dead.

This savage, whether he was Italian or Greek is uncertain, had assisted Boccaccio to write a Latin translation of Homer's *Iliad*, and of part of the *Odyssey*. Boccaccio transmitted a copy of this translation, which our poet caused to be copied. Hence arose a mistaken idea that Petrarch himself translated Homer, which he had not Greek enough to do; but his joy was inexpressible at receiving Boccaccio's present. The same letter which he sent on receiving his Latin Homer contains an interesting declaration from the poet respecting his intercourse with the Visconti. It was reported that he was become a slave at their court. "On this point be at your ease," says Petrarch to his friend, Boccaccio. "I have always been the most free of men, even at times when I appeared subdued to the hardest yoke. I shall not begin to be a slave in my old age; and my mind shall always be free, though my body may be subjected, like your's, to a master or many masters. It seems to me better to live under the law of one tyrant, than to have a tyrannical people instead of one

ruler." It is evident from this sentence that Petrarch's republican principles were now in the wane.

Lælius died of the plague, after four-and-thirty years of singular friendship with Petrarch. His descendant, Lelio dei Leli, says that he intended to publish some of his verses, Latin and Italian, which had been found in Sicily, and that the latter would not have done discredit to Petrarch himself. In 1358, he compiled memoirs of the house of Colonna.

For a year past, Venice had been agitated by a war with the people of Crete. The doge who at that time governed the republic was Lorenzo Celso, a man of superior merit, whose father was still alive. The old gentleman, hearing of Lorenzo's election, thought that, in spite of his son's elevation to that dignity, he ought not to uncover before the boy, and resolved not to go bare-headed into his presence. The shrewd young doge, however, put a gold cross upon the front of his bonnet, and his father was thus obliged to take off his hat. In doing so he exclaimed, "I don't take off my hat to my son, but to the holy cross." The same cross continued to be worn by subsequent doges.

In 1364, peace was concluded between Barnabo Visconti and Urban V. Barnabo having refused to treat with the Cardinal Albornoz, whom he personally hated, his holiness sent the Cardinal Androine de la Roche to Italy as his legate. Petrarch repaired to Bologna to pay his respects to the new representative of the pope. He was touched by the sad condition in which he found that city, which had been so flourishing when he studied at its university. "I seem," he says, "to be in a dream when I see the once fair city desolated by war, by slavery, and by famine. Instead of the joy that once reigned here, sadness is every where spread, and you hear only sighs and wailings in place of songs. Where you formerly saw troops of girls dancing, there are now only bands of robbers and assassins."

Lucchino del Verme, one of the most famous condottieri of his time, had commanded troops in the service of the Visconti, at whose court he made the acquaintance of Petrarch. Our poet invited him to serve the Venetians in the expedition to Candia which took place in 1363, which, in a short time, was crowned with success. Lucchino went to Venice whilst Petrarch was absent, reviewed

the troops, and embarked on board the fleet, which consisted of thirty galleys and eight large vessels.

Petrarch did not return to Venice till the expedition had sailed. He passed the summer in the country, having at his house one of his friends, Barthelemi di Pappazuori, bishop of Christi, whom he had known at Avignon, and who had come purposely to see him. One day, when they were both at a window which overlooked the sea, they beheld one of the long vessels which the Italians call a galeazza entering the harbour. The green branches with which it was decked, the air of joy that appeared among the mariners, the young men crowned with laurel who, from the prow, saluted the standard of their country — every thing betokened that the galeazza brought good news. When the vessel came a little nearer, they could perceive the captured colours of their enemies suspended from the poop, and no doubt could be entertained that a great victory had been won. The moment that the sentinel on the tower had made the signal of a vessel entering the harbour, the people flocked thither in crowds, and their joy was even beyond expectation when they learned that the rebellion

had been totally crushed, and the island reduced to obedience. The most magnificent festivals were given at Venice on this occasion. Well might Petrarch congratulate Lucchino in these words\*—  
“Salve igitur Metelle Cretice, seu tu noster Scipio Veronensis, servator civium, victor hostium, punitor sontium, militiae restaurator.”†

Shortly after these Venetian fêtes, we find our poet writing a long letter to Boccaccio, in which he gives a curious and interesting description of the Jongleurs of Italy. He speaks of them in a very different manner from those pictures that have come down to us of the Provençal Troubadours. The latter were at once poets and musicians, who frequented the courts and castles of great lords, and sang their praises. Their strains, too, were sometimes satirical. They amused themselves with different subjects, and wedded their verses to the sound of the harp and other instruments. They were called Troubadours from the word trobar, “to invent.” They were original

\* Sen. l. iv., Ep. 1.

† After his victorious Candian expedition, Lucchino went to Greece to make war with the Ottomans. He died on the shores of the Black Sea, in the year 1367, as appears from one of the letters of our poet, in which he laments his death.



poets, of the true minstrel breed, similar to those whom Bishop Percy ascribes to England in the olden time, but about the reality of whom, as a professional body, Ritson has shewn some cause to doubt. Of the Italian Jongleurs, Petrarch gives us an humbler notion. "They are a class," he says, "who have little wit, but a great deal of memory, and still more impudence. Having nothing of their own to recite, they snatch at what they can get from others, and go about to the courts of princes to declaim verses, in the vulgar tongue, which they have got by heart. At those courts they insinuate themselves into the favour of the great, and get subsistence and presents. They seek their means of livelihood, that is, the verses they recite, among the best authors, from whom they obtain, by dint of solicitation, and even by bribes of money, compositions for their rehearsal. I have often repelled their importunities, but sometimes, touched by their entreaties, I have spent hours in composing productions for them. I have seen them leave me in rags and poverty, and return, some time afterwards, clothed in silks, and with purses well furnished, to thank me for having relieved them."

In the course of the same amusing correspondence with Boccaccio, which our poet maintained at this period, he gives an account of an atheist and blasphemer at Venice, with whom he had a long conversation. It ended in our poet seizing the infidel by the mantle, and ejecting him from his house with unceremonious celerity. This conclusion of their dialogue gives us a higher notion of Petrarch's piety than of his powers of argument. It is true that a dogged unbeliever is a provoking antagonist; and this must have been a peculiarly provoking one, for, at this period, there were inquisitors and terrible punishments for heretics, who were occasionally burnt alive, after having had their tongues bored or cut out. Yet Petrarch complains that these examples could not frighten them out of Venice. Had our poet been in all, as he was in some respects, superior to the prejudices of his age, he would have spoken more indignantly of these horrors. His sense of justice would have been outraged at the palpable injustice of Christianity, divine as it is, starting in competition with infidelity on such unfair terms, that a man for preaching on one side of the argument might be rewarded with a mitre, and, for speaking on the

other, might have his tongue bored with a red-hot iron. This was scarcely equitable disputation.

Petrarch went to spend the autumn of 1365 at Pavia. Galeazzo Visconti made that city his principal abode. It is believed that Galeazzo's wife and friends persuaded him to quit Milan that he might be separated from his brother Barnabo, whose follies were threatening ruin to the family. To pass the winter till Easter, our poet returned first to Venice, and then to Padua, according to his custom, to do the duties of his canonry. It was then that his native Florence, wishing to recall a man who did her so much honour, thought of asking for him from the pope the canonry of either Florence or Fiesole. Petrarch fully appreciated the shabby kindness of his countrymen. A republic that could afford to be lavish in all other expenses, limited their bounty towards him to the begging of a canonicate for him from his holiness, though Florence had confiscated his father's property. But the pope had other views for him, and had actually appointed him to the canonry of Carpentras, when a false rumour of his death unhappily induced the pontiff to dispose not only of that living, but of Parma and others which he had resigned to indigent friends.

In the June of the following year, 1366, Petrarch sent to Philip of Cassabole his "Treatise on a Solitary Life," together with a letter, which is commonly printed at the head of that work as a sort of dedicatory epistle.

During the February of 1366 there was great joy in the house of Petrarch, for his daughter, Francesca, the wife of Francesco di Brossano, gave birth to a boy, whom Donato degli Albanzani,\* a peculiarly favoured friend of the poet's, held over the baptismal font, whilst he was christened by the name of Francesco.

Meanwhile, our poet was delighted to hear of reformations in the church, which signalized the commencement of Urban V.'s pontificate. After some hesitation, Petrarch ventured to write a strong advice to the pope to remove the holy seat

\* Donato degli Albanzani was a professor of grammar in Venice, where Petrarch probably knew him in the year 1361. Boccaccio says that he was a poor man, but much respected. After the death of Petrarch, he went to Ferrara, to be the preceptor of the Marquis Niccolo d'Este, and, in his old age, obtained the post of his chancellor. He translated from Latin into Italian Petrarch's *Lives of Illustrious Men*. He likewise rendered into the vulgar tongue Boccaccio's *Lives of Illustrious Women*. It is believed that he died towards the end of the fourteenth century.

from Avignon to Rome. His letter is long, zealous, superstitious, and, as usual, a little pedantic. Muratori observes, with justice, that the pope did not need this epistle to spur his intentions as to replacing the holy seat at Rome. But it so happened that he did make the removal no very long time after Petrarch had written to him. The pontiff's departure was fixed for the Easter of the following year.

The news of his holiness's intention gave some uneasiness in France. The French king was fond of the pope's vicinity to his own kingdom, and, alarmed at the project, sent Nicholas d'Oreme to dissuade him from it. Nicholas, in full consistory, made a wretched illogical speech on the subject. Compared with it, Petrarch's letter on the opposite side of the question was of inestimable worth. To Nicholas di Oreme the pope replied in a weighty and overwhelming answer.

Some days after writing the above alluded-to epistle to his holiness, Petrarch went to pass the summer at Pavia. There he found Galeazzo Visconti still occupied in giving fêtes, in honour of the baptism of Valentine of Milan, a child of whom his daughter-in-law, Isabella of France, had been lately delivered.

On the 20th of July of the same year, our poet rose, as was his custom, to his matin devotions, and reflected that he was precisely then entering on his sixty-third year. He wrote to Boccaccio on the subject. He repeats the belief at that time generally entertained, that the sixty-third year of a man's life is its most dangerous crisis. It was a belief connected with astrology, and a superstitious idea of the influence of numbers; of course, if it retains any attention at present, it must subsist on practical observation: and I have heard sensible physicians who had no faith in the influence of the stars confess that they thought that time of life, commonly called the grand climacteric, a critical period for the human constitution.

The Pope Urban's determination to remove his court to Rome was not to be baffled by the obstinacy of his cardinals. He accomplished it, though it is true that he took with him only a part of them. Five of them persisted in remaining at Avignon, and some took their route to Rome by land. Even those who remained with his holiness shewed him a degree of insolence that was well deserving of punishment. The moment the anchor was heaved at Marseilles, May 19th, 1367, they set up

frightful cries, and loaded Urban with reproaches. "Impious father!" they exclaimed, "whither art thou leading thy children?" The pope, however, despised their reproaches, and proceeded in his course; though he stopped some days at Genoa, and still longer at Viterbo, so that he did not arrive at Rome till the month of October. He was joyously received by the Romans; and, in addition to other compliments, had a long letter from Petrarch, who was then at Venice. Some days after the date of this letter, our poet received one from Galeazzo Visconti, who pressed him strongly to come to Pavia, in order to render him an important service. The pope, it seems, wished, at whatever price, to exterminate the Visconti. He thundered this year against Barnabo with a terrible bull, in which he published a crusade against him. Barnabo, to whom, with all his faults, the praise of courage cannot be denied, brought down his troops from the Po, in order to ravage Mantua, and to make himself master of that city. Galeazzo, his brother, less warlike, thought of employing negotiation for appeasing the storm; and he invited Petrarch to Pavia, whither our poet arrived in 1368. He attempted to procure a peace for the Visconti, but was not successful.

It was not, however, solely to treat for a peace with his enemies that Galeazzo drew our poet to his court. He was glad that he should be present at the marriage of his daughter Violante, which was about to be celebrated at Milan. Galeazzo, ambitious in all his ideas, after having united his son to the daughter of the king of France, invited Lionel, Duke of Clarence, son of Edward III. of England, to come and espouse his daughter Violante. The young English prince, followed by many nobles of our land, traversed France, and arrived at Milan on the 14th of May. His nuptials took place about a month later. At the marriage-dinner Petrarch was seated at the table where there were only princes, or nobles of the first rank. It is a curious circumstance that Froissart, so well known as an historian of England, came at this time to Milan, in the suite of the Duke of Clarence, and yet formed no acquaintance with our poet. Froissart was then only about thirty years old. It might have been hoped that the two geniuses would have become intimate friends; but there is no trace of their having even spoken to each other. Petrarch's neglect of Froissart may not have been so wonder-



ful; but it is strange that the latter should not have been ambitious to pay his court to the greatest poet then alive. It is imaginable, however, that Petrarch, with all his natural gentleness, was proud in his demeanour to strangers; and if so, Froissart was excusable for an equally proud reserve.

In the midst of the fêtes that were given for the nuptials of the English prince, Petrarch received news of the death of his grandchild. This little boy had died at Pavia, on the very day of the marriage of Lionel and Violante, when only two years and four months old. Petrarch caused a marble mausoleum to be erected over him, and twelve Latin lines of his own composition to be engraved upon it. He was deeply touched by the loss of his little grandson. "This child," he says, "had a singular resemblance to me, insomuch that any one who had not seen its mother would have taken me for its father."

A most interesting letter from Boccaccio to our poet, which I have inserted in a former chapter of this work, found Petrarch at Pavia, whither he had retired from Milan, wearied with the marriage fêtes. The summer season was now approaching, when he was accustomed to be ill; and he had,

besides, got by the accident of a fall a bad contusion on his leg. He was anxious to return to Padua, and wished to embark on the Po. But war was abroad; the river banks were crowded with troops of the belligerent parties; and no boatmen could be found for some time who would go with him for love or money. At last, he found the master of a vessel bold enough to take him aboard. Any other vessel would have been attacked and pillaged; but Petrarch had no fear; and, indeed, he was stopped in his river passage only to be loaded with presents. He arrived in safety at Padua, on the 9th of June, 1368.

The pope wished much to see our poet at Rome; but Petrarch excused himself on account of his health and the summer season, which was always trying to him. But he promised to repair to his holiness as soon as his health should permit, not to ask benefices of the holy father, but only his blessing. During the same year, we find Petrarch complaining often and painfully of his bodily infirmities. In a letter to Coluccio Salutati, he says: "Age, which makes others garrulous, only makes me silent. When young, I used to write many and long letters. At present, I write only to my par-

ticular friends, and even to them very short letters.” Petrarch was now sixty-four years old. He had never seen Pope Urban V., as he tells us himself; but he was very desirous of seeing him, and of seeing Rome adorned by the two great luminaries of the world. This metaphor, which Petrarch uses, requires explanation. By the two luminaries, he means the pope and the emperor. Pope Urban, fearing the heats of Italy, to which he was not accustomed, had gone to pass the dog-days at Monte-Fiascone. When he returned to Rome, in October, on his arrival at the Colline gate, near the church of St. Angelo, he found the emperor, who was waiting for him. The emperor, the moment he saw his holiness, dismounted from his horse, took the reins of that of the pope, and conducted him on foot to the church of St. Peter. As to this submission of civil to ecclesiastical dignity, different opinions were entertained, even at Rome; and the wiser class of men disapproved of it, though Boccaccio, always frank and natural, even when his feelings were misguided, speaks with rapture of the circumstance. It should not be forgotten, at the same time, that Boccaccio’s mind had before this time shewn symptoms of super-

fluous piety and declining strength. Petrarch's opinion on the subject is not recorded; but, during this year, there is no proof that he had any connexion with the emperor; and my own opinion is that he did not approve of his conduct. It is certain that Petrarch condemned the pope's entering Rome at the head of 2000 soldiery. "The Roman pontiff," he remarks, "should trust to his dignity and to his sanctity, when, coming into our capital, and not to an army with their swords and cuirasses. The cross of Jesus is the only standard which he ought to rear. Trumpets and drums were out of place. It would have been enough to have sung hallelujahs."

- . Petrarch, in his letter to Boccaccio, in the month of September, says that he had got the fever; and he was still so feeble that he was obliged to employ the hand of a stranger in writing to him. He indites as follows: "I have had the fever for forty days. It weakened me so much that I could not go to my church, though it is near my house, without being carried. I feel as if my health would never be restored. My constitution seems to be entirely worn out." In another letter to the Cardinal Cabassole, who informed him of the

pope's wish to see him, he says: "His holiness does me more honour than I deserve. It is to you that I owe this obligation. Return a thousand thanks to the holy father in your own name and in mine." The pope was so anxious to see Petrarch that he wrote to him with his own hand, reproaching him for refusing his invitation. Our poet, after returning a second apology, passed the winter in making preparations for this journey; but before setting out he thought proper to make his will. It was written with his own hand at Padua.

In his testament he forbids weeping for his death, justly remarking that tears do no good to the dead, and may do harm to the living. He asks only prayers and alms to the poor who will pray for him. "As for my burial," he says, "let it be made as my friends think fit. What signifies it to me where my body is laid?" He then makes some bequests in favour of the religious orders; and he founds an anniversary in his own church of Padua, which is still celebrated every year on the 9th of July.

Then come his legacies to his friends. He bequeaths to the Lord of Padua his picture of the Virgin, painted by Giotto; "the beauty of which,"

he says, "is little known to the ignorant, though the masters of art will never look upon it without admiration."

To Donato di Prato Vecchio, master of grammar, at Venice, he leaves all the money that he had lent him. He bequeaths the horses he may have at his death to Bonzanello di Vigoncia and Lombardo da Serigo, two friends of his, citizens of Padua, wishing them to draw lots for the choice of the horses. He avows being indebted to Lombardo da Serigo 134 golden ducats, advanced for the expenses of his house. He also bequeaths to the same person a goblet of silver gilt (undoubtedly the same which the Emperor Charles had sent him in 1362). He leaves to John Abucheta, warden of his church, his great breviary, which he bought at Venice for 100 francs, on condition that, after his death, this breviary shall remain in the sacristy for the use of the future priests of the church. To John Boccaccio he bequeaths 50 gold florins of Florence, to buy him a winter-habit for his studies at night. "I am ashamed," he adds, "to leave so small a sum to so great a man;" but he entreats his friends in general to impute the smallness of their legacies to that of his fortune. To

Tomaso Bambasi, of Ferrara, he makes a present of his good lute, that he may make use of it in singing the praises of God. To Giovanni Dandi, physician of Padua, he leaves 50 ducats of gold, to buy a gold ring, which he may wear in remembrance of him.

He appoints Francesco da Brossano, citizen of Milan, his heir, and desires him, not only as his heir, but as his dear son, to divide into two parts the money he should find—the one for himself, the other for the person to whom it was assigned. “It would seem by this,” says De Sade, “that Petrarch would not mention his daughter by name in a public will, because she was not born in marriage.” Yet his shyness to name her makes it singular that he should style Brossano his son. In case Brossano should die before him, he appoints Lombardo da Serigo his eventual heir. De Sade considers the appointment as a deed of trust. With respect to his little property at Vacluse, he leaves it to the hospital in that diocese. His last bequest is to his brother Gherardo, a Carthusian of Montrieux. He desires his heir to write to him immediately after his decease, and to give him the option of a hundred florins of gold, payable at once, or by five or ten florins every year.

A few days after he had made this will, he set out for Rome. The pleasure with which he undertook the journey made him suppose that he could support it. But when he reached Ferrara he fell down in a fit, in which he continued thirty hours, without sense or motion; and it was supposed that he was dead. The most violent remedies were used to restore him to consciousness, but he says that he felt them no more than a statue.

Nicholas d'Este II., the son of Obizzo, was at that time Lord of Ferrara, a friend and admirer of Petrarch's. The physicians thought him dead, and the whole city was in grief. The news spread to Padua, Venice, Milan, and Pavia. Crowds came from all parts to his burial. Ugo d'Este, the brother of Nicholas, a young man of much merit, who had an enthusiastic regard for Petrarch, paid him unremitting attention during his illness. He came three or four times a day to see him, and sent messengers incessantly to inquire how he was. Our poet acknowledged that he owed his life to the kindness of those two noblemen.

Ugo d'Este was passionately fond of tournaments. With all the precautions that were taken in these warlike exercises, and, though edged and



pointed weapons were forbidden, they were always dangerous, and sometimes deadly. Ugo was the nobleman who chiefly distinguished himself in such games ; and, as his life had been often endangered by them, his relations desired our venerable poet to attempt moderating the young man's fondness for them. Petrarch wrote to him on the subject ; but as, in spite of the Ayrshire fêtes, the youth of our day seem to be little addicted to those martial sports, it is unnecessary to quote from his moral epistle. The amiable Ugo died soon after receiving it, in the August of 1370.

When Petrarch was thus recovering, he was impatient to pursue his route, though the physicians assured him that he could not get to Rome alive. He would have attempted the journey in spite of their warnings, if his strength had seconded his desires, but he was unable to sit his horse. They brought him back to Padua, laid on a soft seat on a boat. His unhopèd-for return caused as much surprise as joy in that city, where he was received by its lords and citizens with as much joy as if he had come back from the other world. To re-establish his health, he went to a village called Arqua, situated on the slope of a hill famous for the salu-

brity of its air, the goodness of its wines, and the beauty of its vineyards. An everlasting spring reigns there, and the place commands a view of pleasingly scattered villas. Petrarch built himself a house on the high ground of the village, and he added to the vines of the country a great number of other fruit-trees.

He had scarcely fixed himself at Arqua, when he put his last hand to a work which he had begun in the year 1367. To explain the subject of this work, and the circumstances which gave rise to it, I think it necessary to state what was the real cause of our poet's disgust at Venice. He appeared there, no doubt, to lead an agreeable life among many friends, whose society was delightful to him. But there reigned in this city what Petrarch thought licentiousness in conversation. The most ignorant persons were in the habit of undervaluing the finest geniuses. It fills one with regret to find Petrarch impatient of a liberty of speech, which, whatever its abuses may be, cannot be suppressed, without crushing the liberty of human thought. At Venice, moreover, the philosophy of Aristotle was much in vogue, if doctrines could be called Aristotelian, which had been disfigured by commentators, and

still worse garbled by Averroes. The disciples of Averroes at Venice insisted on the world having been co-eternal with God, and made a joke of Moses and his Book of Genesis. "Would the eternal architect," they said, "remain from all eternity doing nothing?" Certainly not! The world's youthful appearance is owing to its revolutions, and the changes it has undergone by deluges and conflagrations. "Those free-thinkers," Petrarch tells us, "had a great contempt for Christ and his Apostles, as well as for all those who did not bow the knee to the Stagyrite." They called the doctrines of Christianity fables, and hell and heaven the tales of asses. Finally, they believed that Providence takes no care of any thing under the region of the moon. Four young Venetians of this sect had attached themselves to Petrarch, who endured their society, but opposed their opinions. His opposition offended them, and they resolved to humble him in the public estimation. They constituted themselves a tribunal to try his merits: they appointed an advocate to plead for him, and they concluded by determining that he was a good man, but illiterate!

This affair made a great stir at Venice. Pe-

trarch seems at first to have smiled with sensible contempt at so impertinent a farce ; but will it be believed that his friends, and among them Donato and Boccaccio, advised and persuaded him to treat it seriously, and to write a book about it ? Petrarch accordingly put his pen to the subject. He wrote a treatise, which he entitled “ *De sui ipsius et aliorum ignorantia* — ” On his own ignorance, and on that of others.

Petrarch had himself formed the design of confuting the doctrines of Averroes ; but he engaged Ludovico Marsili, an Augustine monk of Florence, to perform the task. This monk in Petrarch’s opinion possessed great natural powers, and our poet exhorts him to write against that rabid animal (Averroes) who barks with so much fury against Christ and his Apostles. Unfortunately, the rabid animals who write against the truths we are most willing to believe are difficult to be killed.

The good air of the Euganean mountains failed to re-establish the health of Petrarch. He continued ill during the summer of 1370. John di Dondi, his physician, or rather his friend, for he would have no physician, would not quit Padua without going to see him. He wrote to him after-

wards that he had discovered the true cause of his disease, and that it arose from his eating fruits, drinking water, and frequent fastings. His medical adviser, also, besought him to abstain from all salted meats, and raw fruits, or herbs. Petrarch easily renounced salted provisions, "but, as to fruits," he says, "Nature must have been a very unnatural mother to give us such agreeable food, with such delightful hues and fragrance, only to seduce her children with poison covered over with honey."

Whilst Petrarch was thus ill, he received news very unlikely to forward his recovery. The pope took a sudden resolution to return to Avignon. That city, in concert with the Queen of Naples and the Kings of France and Arragon, sent him vessels to convey him to Avignon. Urban gave as a reason for his conduct the necessity of making peace between the crowns of France and England, but no one doubted that the love of his own country, the difficulty of inuring himself to the climate of Rome, the enmity and rebellious character of the Italians, and the importunities of his cardinals, were the true cause of his return. He was received with great demonstrations of joy ; but

St. Bridget had told him that if he went to Avignon he should die soon afterwards.

It showed no very marvellous powers of divination in the fair saint to have anticipated the death of an old man, whose continuance in life for half a year no insurance-office would have warranted at any premium; but, it so happened that her prophecy was fulfilled, for the pope not long after his arrival in Provence was seized with a mortal illness. He died in public, on the 19th of December, 1370, having ordered all the doors of his house to be opened, and visitors to be admitted without distinction, in order that the world might be the more impressed by witnessing his death. He died extended on a sorry bed, like a poor man, in the habit of St. Benedict, which he always wore, showing every mark of piety, penance, and resignation. In the course of his pontificate, he received two singular honours. The emperor of the west performed the office of his equerry, and the emperor of the east abjured schism, acknowledging him as primate of the whole Christian church.

The news of Urban's death, soon reaching Padua, prevented Petrarch from writing to the pope, as he intended, one of those free-and-easy letters of

advice and remonstrance which he was in the habit of sending to the highest persons. He writes about him in mild and laudatory terms, laying the blame of his return from Rome on his evil advisers, and extolling his sanctity, as well as alluding with apparent belief to the miracles he had wrought. So general was the belief in those miracles, that the Kings of France and Denmark, the Queen of Naples, the Bishops of Languedoc and Provence, solicited his canonisation from the succeeding pontiff. But Clement VII. thought that the times, abounding so much in schism, were unpropitious to the creation of new saints. The Reformation was, in fact, already dawning, and among those who unconsciously contributed to it was Petrarch. How strange to see a scholar, who otherwise advanced the cause of civilization, believing like a simpleton in Pope Urban's miracles! Nor is it less strange to find De Sade in 1767 dogmatizing on the same absurdities. He mentions a formal trial of those miracles recorded in a MS. of the Vatican. Eighty-two of the prodigies were found to be authentic, among which were the cases of two dead girls restored to life at Avignon.

The cardinals chose as Urban's successor a man

who did honour to their election, namely, Pietro Rogero, nephew of Clement VI., who took the name of Gregory XI. Petrarch knew him, he had seen him at Padua in 1367, when the cardinal was on his way to Rome, and rejoiced at his accession. The new pontiff caused a letter to be written to our poet, expressing his wish to see him, and to be of service to him. This letter is not extant, at least De Sade could not find it, nor has Petrarch's answer been preserved. But we possess another letter, which Petrarch wrote to Francesco Bruni about the same time, entering minutely into the state of his own affairs, and discovering, I think, that he was not so perfectly indifferent to the good things of this world, as the general tenor of his letters would lead us to imagine. This, however, is far from proving that Petrarch was a hypocrite in his former declarations of disinterestedness; for there are changes that come upon our mental as well as physical constitutions, at a certain age; and, strange as the fact may be, more of us feel than confess the truth, that, when the shortened span of life ought to make us more indifferent to money than in younger years, we duck down our grey heads into the money-box with increased devotion.



In the letter to which I allude, Petrarch tells his friend, "Were I to say that I want means to lead the life of a canon, I should be wrong, but when I say that my single self have more acquaintances than all the chapter put together, and, consequently, that I am put to more expenses in the way of hospitality, then I am right. This embarrassment increases every day, and my resources diminish. I have made vain efforts to free myself from my difficulties. My prebend, it is true, yields me more bread and wine than I need for my own consumption. I can even sell some of it. But my expenses are very considerable. I have never less than two horses, usually five or six amanuenses. I have only three at this moment. It is because I could find no more. Here it is easier to find a painter than an amanuensis. I have a venerable priest, who never quits me when I am at church. Sometimes when I count upon dining with him alone, behold, a crowd of guests will come in. I must give them something to eat, and I must tell them amusing stories, or else pass for being proud or avaricious.

"I am desirous to found a little oratory for the Virgin Mary; and shall do so, though I should sell or pawn my books. After that I shall go to

Avignon, if my strength permits. If it does not, I shall send one of my people to the Cardinal Cabassole, and to you, that you may attempt to accomplish what I have often wished, but uselessly, as both you and he well know. If the holy father wishes to stay my old age, and put me into somewhat better circumstances, as he appears to me to wish, and as his predecessor promised me, the thing would be very easy. Let him do as it may please him, much, little, or nothing; I shall be always content. Only let him not say to me as Clement VI. used to do, ‘ask what you wish for.’ I cannot do so, for several reasons. In the first place, I do not myself know exactly what would suit me. Secondly, if I were to demand some vacant place, it might be given away before my demand reached the feet of his holiness. Thirdly, I might make a request that might displease him. His extreme kindness might pledge him to grant it; and I should be made miserable by obtaining it.

“ Let him give me, then, whatever he pleases, without waiting for my petitioning for it. Would it become me, at my years, to be a solicitor for benefices, having never been so in my youth? I trust, in this matter, to what you may do with the

Cardinal Sabina. You are the only friends who remain to me in that country. These thirty years the Cardinal has given me marks of his affection and good-will. I am about to write to him a few words on the subject ; and I shall refer him to this letter, to save my repeating to him those miserable little details with which I should not detain you, unless it seemed to be necessary.

“If it be absolutely wished that I should explain myself on the kind of benefice which I should wish, I shall quote what Cotta says in Cicero : ‘In the most part of the things of this world, it is easier to say what is not, than what is.’ I wish not for a benefice that has a charge of souls, whatever its revenue may be. The charge of my own soul is sufficient for me. For the rest, let his holiness do whatever he thinks proper. *I* shall for ever be his servant—useless, but faithful and submissive. His generosity may inspire my gratitude, but cannot augment my zeal and attachment. If he gives me any benefice, the deposit will be but short ; for I feel that I am going, and that I am vanishing away like a shade. I am not conscious, at the same time, of having lived in such a manner as to deserve being extinguished thus. If it be to

expiate my sins, so much the better. I pray to God every day that I may go through my purgatory in this world."

It is evident from this letter that Petrarch was not quite so disinterested and detached from the good things of this world as he would sometimes wish to appear. De Sade is astonished that this little trait of worldly-mindedness should appear at this late period of his life, when he was feeling the approaches of dissolution, as appears both from this letter, and from that which he wrote to the Cardinal Cabassole, excusing himself from not having instantly obeyed the invitation of the pope. "I had projected," he says, "that the cardinal was to have set out from hence in spring; but there has been no spring-time this year. A burning summer has taken the place of a rigorous winter. In spite of this I reckoned on departing, and had even packed up my trunks, when, on the 7th of May, I was attacked by a violent fever which deranged all my projects. I was so dreadfully ill that my physicians thought me dead. They said that I should not get through, but the next morning they found me recovered. This has happened to me more than ten times during the last ten

years." On this last occasion the doctors had modified their sentence of death, by admitting the possibility of his surviving the night, if he could be kept incessantly awake. Petrarch, ill as he was, instructed his attendants to disregard their directions about preventing him from sleep. When the medical sages came next morning, and learned that he had slept, and found him not only alive, but out of bed and writing, they could only give vent to their astonishment by declaring that Petrarch was not like other men.

A short time afterwards, Petrarch heard, with no small satisfaction, of the Cardinal Cabassole, at Perugia. That city, which had revolted against Pope Urban, had been again obliged to submit to the dominion of the holy chair. It was an important city ; but its citizens were rebellious spirits, and it behoved the pope to send them a governor to hold them in submission with a firm and skilful hand. The other cardinals, who were jealous of Urban's predilection for Cabassole, were glad, for the present, to get rid of him, and loudly applauded his holiness's choice of a ruler for the Perugians. When the Cardinal came to take leave, the evening before his departure, he said to the

pope, "Holy father, permit me to recommend Petrarch to you, on account of my love for him. He is, indeed, a man unique upon earth; a true phoenix." He went out repeating this with all the warmth of friendship. Scarcely was he gone, when the Cardinal of Boulogne, making pleasantries on the word phoenix, turned alike into ridicule both the praises of Cabassole and him who was their object. Francesco Bruni, in writing to Petrarch about the kindness of the one cardinal, thought it unnecessary to report the pleasantries of the other. But Petrarch, who had heard of them from another quarter, relates them himself to Bruni, and says: "I am not astonished. This man loved me formerly, and I was equally attached to him. At present he hates me, and I return his hatred. Would you know the reason of this double change? It is because he is the enemy of truth, and I am the enemy of falsehood; he dreads the liberty which inspires me, and I detest the pride with which he is swollen. If our fortunes were equal, and if we were together in a free place, I should not call myself a phoenix; for that title ill becomes me; but he would be an owl. Such people as he imagine, on account of riches ill-acquired, and

worse employed, that they are at liberty to say what they please."

On his arrival at Perugia, the cardinal wrote affectionately to Petrarch, inquiring respecting his health, and congratulating him on having heard that he had borne his late illness with heroic courage. Petrarch's answer teems with reciprocal friendship; he tells the good old man that he is almost the only friend who is now left him, and that, unless his evil fortune pursues him, he must contrive to pay him a visit. "I must embrace you, dear father," he says, "I must recall to you our villegiaturas, at Vaucluse, of the days that we passed in the woods, forgetful of dinner, and of the entire nights when we conversed deliciously in the midst of books till morning surprised us. You praise my courage in illness. It is true that my physicians and my friends were astonished to see me gay and tranquil in the midst of the greatest sufferings; not a tear, not a sigh, but that courage and patience came to me from heaven, and I deserve no praise for it."

In the letter which Bruni wrote to Petrarch, to apprise him of Cabassole's departure, and of what he had said to the pope in his favour, he gave him

notice of the promotion of twelve new cardinals, whom Gregory had just installed with a view to balance the domineering authority of the others. "And I fear," he adds, "that the pope's obligations to satiate those new and hungry comers may retard the effects of his good-will towards you." "Let his holiness satiate them," replied Petrarch; "let him appease their thirst, which is more than the Tagus, the Pactolus, and the ocean itself could do—I agree to it; and let him not think of me. I am neither famished nor thirsty. I shall content myself with their leavings, and with what the holy father may think meet to give, if he deigns to think of me."

Bruni was right. The pope, beset by applications on all hands, had no time to think of Petrarch. Bruni for a year discontinued his correspondence. His silence vexed our poet. He wrote to Francesco, saying, "You do not write to me, because you cannot communicate what you would wish. You understand me ill, and you do me injustice. I desire nothing, and I hope for nothing but an easy death. Nothing is more ridiculous than an old man's avarice; though nothing is more common. It is like a voyager wishing to heap up provisions for his voyage when he sees himself



approaching the end of it. The holy father has written me a most obliging letter: is not that sufficient for me? I have not a doubt of his good will towards me, but he is encompassed by people who thwart his intentions. Would that those persons could know how much I despise them, and how much I prefer my mediocrity to the vain grandeur which renders them so proud!" After a tirade against his enemies in purple, evidently some of the cardinals, he reproaches Bruni for having dwelt so long for lucre in the ill-smelling Avignon; he exhorts him to leave it and to come and end his days at Florence. He says that he does not write to the pope for fear of appearing to remind him of his promises. "I have received," he adds, "his letter and Apostolic blessing; I beg you to communicate to his holiness, in the clearest manner, that I wish for no more."

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXX.

Death of Cardinal Cabassole—Petrarch's Letter, giving an account of his situation to Matthew le Long — Hostilities between Venice and Padua — Rainier, Commander of the Venetian Army—Pandolfo Malatesta invites Petrarch to Pesaro, and begs a copy of his Italian Works—Death of Malatesta — The King of Hungary joins Francesco da Carrara against the Venetians— He insists on Carrara concluding an ignominious Peace —Conspiracy of Carrara's brothers against him — Petrarch writes for Carrara a work on the best mode of governing a state—Character of Carrara—Illness of Petrarch—He reads Boccaccio's Decameron — Anecdotes concerning the Story of Griseldis — His Letter to Boccaccio with a Latin Translation of that Story — His Death — His Funeral and Monument — Boccaccio's Letter to his Son-in-Law respecting him — Death of Boccaccio.

## CHAPTER XXX.

FROM this period Petrarch's health was never re-established. He was languishing with wishes to repair to Perugia, and to see his dear friend the Cardinal Cabassole. At the commencement of spring he mounted a horse, in order to see if he could support the journey; but his weakness was such that he could only ride a few steps. He wrote to the cardinal expressing his regrets, but seems to console himself by recalling to his old friend the days they had spent together at Vaucluse, and their long walks, in which they often strayed so far, that the servant who came to seek for them and to announce that dinner was ready could not find them till the evening.

It appears from this epistle that our poet had a general dislike to cardinals. "You are not," he tells Cabassole, "like most of your brethren, whose

heads are turned by a bit of red cloth so far as to forget that they are mortal men. It seems, on the contrary, as if honours rendered you more humble, and I do not believe that you would change your mode of thinking if they were to put a crown on your head." The good cardinal, whom Petrarch paints in such pleasing colours, could not accustom himself to the climate of Italy. He had scarcely arrived there when he fell ill, and died on the 26th of August in the same year. His body was carried, according to his testamentary order, to the Chartreuse of Bonpus, where a mausoleum of marble was erected to him.

Of all the friends whom Petrarch had had at Avignon, he had now none left but Mattheus le Long, archdeacon of Liege, with whom his ties of friendship had subsisted ever since they had studied together at Bologna. From him he received a letter on the 5th of January, 1372, and in his answer, dated the same day at Padua, he gives this picture of his condition, and of the life which he led:—

“ You ask about my condition—it is this. I am, thanks to God, sufficiently tranquil, and free, unless I deceive myself, from all the passions of my youth.

I enjoyed good health for a long time, but for two years past I have become infirm. Frequently, those around me have believed me dead, but I live still, and pretty much the same as you have known me. I could have mounted higher ; but I wished not to do so, since every elevation is suspicious. I have acquired many friends and a good many books : I have lost my health and many friends ; I have spent some time at Venice. At present I am at Padua, where I perform the functions of canon. I esteem myself happy to have quitted Venice, on account of that war which has been declared between that Republic and the Lord of Padua. At Venice I should have been suspected : here I am caressed. I pass the greater part of the year in the country, which I always prefer to the town. I repose, I write, I think ; so you see that my way of life and my pleasures are the same as in my youth. Having studied so long, it is astonishing that I have learnt so little. I hate nobody, I envy nobody. In that first season of life which is full of error and presumption, I despised all the world except myself. In middle life, I despised only myself. In my aged years, I despise all the world, and myself most of all. I fear only

those whom I love. I desire only a good end. I dread a company of valets like a troop of robbers.\* I should have none at all, if my age and weakness permitted me. I am fain to shut myself up in concealment, for I cannot endure visits; it is an honour which displeases and wears me out. Amidst the Euganean hills I have built a small but neat mansion, where I reckon on passing quietly the rest of my days, having always before my eyes my dead or absent friends. To conceal nothing from you, I have been sought after by the pope, the emperor, and the king of France, who have given me pressing invitations, but I have constantly declined them, preferring my liberty to every thing."

In this letter, Petrarch speaks of a sharp war that had arisen between Venice and Padua, which it is necessary to notice, because our hero performs a part in the scene, and it is his last appearance on the stage of this world.

For some time past a cloud of discord had been rising between those two states. The house of Carrara owed its elevation to the Venetians, who

\* I am quite of Petrarch's opinion as to men-servants, and I agree with the Ettrick Shepherd when he says, "If I had fifty servants, they should be all lasses."

reproached them with having behaved ungratefully to Venice. They alleged that Francesco da Carrara had secretly favoured the king of Hungary when he was at war with their Republic, an accusation, perhaps, not wholly unfounded. The Lord of Padua, moreover, had built a fort upon the river which runs to Chioggia, and another on the Brenta, in the village of Oriago, near the lagunes of Venice, with the intention of making salt. The Republic, jealous of its alleged and exclusive right to the manufacture of salt, saw these two fortresses with inquietude, and complained that they were built within their territories. Francesco Carrara, on the other hand, complained of similar encroachments being made by the Venetians on the territory of Padua. The main business was now to fix the limits of the two states. The commissioners appointed on both sides could not come to an agreement. It was thought necessary to go to war; and hostilities commenced towards the end of the year 1372.

A Gascon, named Rainier, who commanded the troops of Venice, having thrown bridges over the Brenta, established his camp at Abano, whence he sent detachments to ravage the lands of Padua.

Petrarch was in great alarm; for Arquà is only two leagues from Abano. He set out on the 15th of November for Padua, to put himself and his books under protection. A friend at Verona wrote to him, saying, "Only write your name over the door of your house, and fear nothing; it will be your safeguard." The advice, it is hardly necessary to say, was absurd. Among the pillaging soldiery there were thousands who could not have read the poet's name if they had seen it written, and of those who were accomplished enough to read, probably many who would have thought Petrarch as fit to be plundered as another man. Petrarch, therefore, sensibly replied, "I should be sorry to trust them. Mars respects not the favourites of the Muses; I have no such idea of my name, as that it would shelter me from the furies of war. He was even in pain about his domestics, whom he left at Arquà, and who joined him some days afterwards.

Rainier wished to have laid siege to Padua; but, a quarrel having arisen between him and the commissaries of the Venetian army, he resigned his command, and the army remained inactive.

Pandolfo Malatesta, learning what was passing



in the Paduan territory, and the danger to which Petrarch was exposed, sent to offer him his horses, and an escort to conduct him to Pesaro, which was at that time his residence. He was Lord of Pesaro and Fossombrone. The envoy of Pandolfo found our poet at Padua, and used every argument to second his lord's invitation; but Petrarch excused himself on account of the state of his health, the insecurity of the high ways, and the severity of the weather. Besides, he said that it would be disgraceful to him to leave Padua in the present circumstances, and that it would expose him to the suspicion of cowardice, which he never deserved. The apology would have been more graceful if he had confined himself to its last clause, and said nothing about roads, health, and weather.

His correspondence with Pandolfo proves that much affection subsisted between them.

Pandolfo earnestly solicited from Petrarch a copy of his Italian works. Our poet in answer says to him, "I have sent to you by your messenger these trifles which were the amusement of my youth. They have need of all your indulgence. It is shameful for an old man to send you things of this nature; but you have earnestly asked for them,

and can I refuse you any thing? With what grace could I deny you verses which are current in the streets, and are in the mouth of all the world, who prefer them to the more solid compositions that I have produced in my riper years."

This letter is dated at Padua, on the 4th of January, 1373. Pandolfo Malatesta died a short time after receiving it. He was a great warrior, and he also cultivated the Muses. Verses of his composition are to be found among the MSS. of the Riccardi library at Florence.

Several powers interfered to mediate peace between Venice and Padua, but their negotiations ended in nothing, the spirits of both belligerents were so embittered. The pope had sent as his nuncio for this purpose a young professor of law, named Uguzzone de Thiene, who was acquainted with Petrarch. He lodged with our poet when he came to Padua, and he communicated to him some critical remarks which had been written at Avignon on Petrarch's letter to Pope Urban V., congratulating him on his return to Rome. A French monk of the order of St. Bernard passed for the author of this work. As it spoke irreverently of Italy, it stirred up the bile of Petrarch, and made

him resume the pen with his sickly hand. His answer to the offensive production glows with anger, and is harsh even to abusiveness. He declaims, as usual, in favour of Italy, which he adored, and against France, which he disliked.

The negotiations for peace having failed, war was conducted with fury. Francesco da Carrara, unable to resist alone all the forces of the Venetians, earnestly pressed the king of Hungary to come to his succour. That prince accordingly sent him troops commanded by the Waiwode of Transylvania, who took the route of the Frioul, with a view to penetrate into the Trevisan, and join forces with Francesco da Carrara. Taddeo Giustiniani, general of the Venetian army, endeavoured to prevent this junction; but he was defeated, and taken prisoner. The junction having been effected, the Lord of Padua found himself in a state to face his enemies, who were now commanded by Giberto da Correggio, and several combats took place in the course of the year; but they decided nothing. At last the Hungarians, weary of the war, wrote to the king that Francesco da Carrara was sacrificing them to his ambition; and that the only way of saving the rest of the army was to con-

strain him to make peace by threatening to declare against him.

The Carrara was struck with consternation when the king of Hungary sent him a declaration to this effect. He saw that he could now do nothing but make peace on the terms that were prescribed to him by the Venetians. A peace was accordingly signed at Venice on the 11th of September, 1373. The conditions were hard and humiliating to the chief of Padua. The third article ordained that he should come in person, or send his son, to ask pardon of the Venetian Republic for the insults he had offered her, and swear inviolable fidelity to her. The Lord of Padua sent his son Francesco Novello, and requested Petrarch to accompany him. Our poet had no great wish to do so, and had too good an excuse in the state of his health, which was still very fluctuating, but the prince importuned him, and he thought that he could not refuse a favour to such a friend.

Francesco Novello, accompanied by Petrarch, and by a great suite of Paduan gentlemen, arrived at Venice on the 27th of September, where they were well received, especially the poet. On the following day the chiefs of the maiden city gave

him a public audience. But, whether the majesty of the Venetian senate affected Petrarch, or his illness returned by accident, so it was that he could not deliver the speech which he had prepared, for his memory failed him. But the universal desire to hear him induced the senators to postpone their sitting to the following day. He then spoke with energy, and was extremely applauded.\* Francesco Novello begged pardon, and took the oath of fidelity.

Monsieur de la Bastie, in his life of our poet, says "that the Lord of Padua sent Petrarch to Venice to sue for peace, and that his eloquence so moved the senate, that they could not refuse it." This is an error, but an excusable one; because de la Bastie had for his authorities the writers of the *Journal of Italy* and several grave historians.

De Sade finds an historian of Venice, recent in his time, asserting that Francesco Novello put his knee to the ground in the act of asking pardon, and the doge made him rise, saying to him, "Go and sin no more, neither thou nor thy father." The fact may be so, yet it seems scarcely credible

\* This discourse was never printed; but De Sade thinks it is certainly to be found in some of the libraries of Italy.

that the chief of Venice should have spoken so harshly in full senate to an humbled enemy.

Francesco Carrara had two brothers, Marsilio and Nicholas, who conspired against him, in order to force him to make peace. The conspiracy was discovered, Marsilio was arrested, and shut up in prison at Monselice, near Arquà. Nicholas escaped to Venice. When Francesco heard of this plot he exclaimed, "I am astonished, and yet I am not astonished at either the good or evil that falls out in this world." He proposed this enigma to Petrarch, requiring a solution of it. The poet answered him by letter as follows. "I recognize your wit in the enigma which you propose to me. It is not impossible to reconcile this apparent contradiction. When you think of the corruption of the human heart, you are astonished at the good which men do. It is the rarity of good actions that causes your astonishment; but it ceases when you reflect that God is the author of all good. As to evil, one cannot but be surprised at it, when we see son conspire against father, brother against brother, wife against husband, and the ungrateful against his benefactor. But one ceases to be surprised at last at what one sees occurring in

the world every day. If I have divined your enigma, I shall be happy ; if I have not, I shall willingly learn the solution from yourself." Speaking afterwards in the same letter of the discovered conspiracy, he exhorts Francesco to be more discreet in chusing those to whom he gave his confidence. "I am not ignorant," he says, "how difficult it is to discriminate sincere from painted hearts, but I count upon your intelligence and experience."

Francesco da Carrara loved, esteemed, and revered Petrarch. His greatest pleasure was to converse with him, and he used to go frequently to see him without ceremony in his small mansion at Arquà. The prince one day complained to him that he had written for all the world excepting himself. Petrarch thought long and seriously about what he should compose that might please the Carrara ; but the task was embarrassing. To praise him directly might seem sycophantish and fulsome to the prince himself. To censure him would be still more indelicate. To escape the difficulty, he projected a treatise on the best mode of governing a state, and on the qualities required in the person who has such a charge. This subject

furnished occasion for giving indirect praises, and, at the same time, for pointing out some defects which he had remarked in his patron's government.

It cannot be denied that there are some excellent maxims respecting government in this treatise, and that it was a laudable work for the fourteenth century. But since that period the subject has been so often discussed by minds of the first order, that we should look in vain into Petrarch's Essay for any truths that have escaped their observation. Nature offers herself in virgin beauty to the primitive poet. But abstract truth comes not to the philosopher, till she has been tried by the test of time.

Petrarch in this composition gives us a high idea of Francesco da Carrara, of his virtues, and of his talents for government. And the same character is ascribed to him by the best contemporary authors, whilst Laugier, in his History of Venice, paints him as a monster of ingratitude and perfidy. "I know not," says De Sade, "whence Laugier derived his dark colours, for he has not thought fit to name his authorities on the margin of his page; but as the Republic treated the house of Carrara with the rankest cruelty, we ought to dis-



trust whatever is said by Venetian historians respecting that unfortunate family.

After his return from Venice Petrarch only languished. A low fever, that undermined his constitution, left him but short intervals of health, but made no change in his mode of life ; he passed the greater part of the day in reading or writing. It does not appear, however, that he composed any work in the course of the year 1374. A few letters to Boccaccio are all that can be traced to his pen during that period. Their date is not marked in them, but they were certainly written shortly before his death. None of them possess any particular interest, excepting that always in which he mentions the Decameron.

It seems at first sight not a little astonishing that Petrarch, who had been on terms of the strictest friendship with Boccaccio for twenty-four years, should never till now have read the Decameron, confessedly the best work of its author. Why did not Boccaccio send him his Decameron long before ? The solution of this question must be made by ascribing the circumstance to Boccaccio's sensitive respect for the austere moral character of our poet. He knew that the lover of

Laura could not amuse his hours with mischievous or idle passions ; he knew that he rose at midnight to repeat his matins, and never intermitted the practice. On what succeeding hour could he venture to seize ? with what countenance could he charge the poet to listen to the levities of the world ?

It is not known by what accident the Decameron fell into Petrarch's hands, during the heat of the war between Venice and Padua. Even then his occupations did not permit him to peruse it thoroughly ; he only slightly ran through it, after which he says in his letter to Boccaccio, " I have not read your book with sufficient attention to pronounce an opinion upon it ; but it has given me great pleasure. That which is too free in the work is sufficiently excusable for the age at which you wrote it, for its elegant language, for the levity of the subject, for the class of readers to whom it is suited. Besides, in the midst of much gay and playful matter, several grave and pious thoughts are to be found. Like the rest of the world, I have been particularly struck by the beginning and the end. The description which you give of the state of our country during the plague, appeared to me most true and most pathetic. The story

which forms the conclusion made so vivid an impression on me, that I wished to get it by heart, in order to repeat it to some of my friends."

Petrarch, perceiving that this touching story of Griseldis made an impression on all the world, had an idea of translating it into Latin, for those who knew not the vulgar tongue. The following anecdote respecting it is told by Petrarch himself. "One of his friends, a man of knowledge and intellect, undertook to read it to a company; but he had hardly got into the midst of it, when his tears would not permit him to continue. Again he tried to resume the reading, but with no better success."

Another friend from Verona having heard what had befallen the Paduan, wished to try the same experiment; he took up the composition, and read it aloud from beginning to end without the smallest change of voice or countenance, and said, in returning the book, "It must be owned that this is a touching story, and I should have wept, also, if I believed it to be true; but it is clearly a fable. There never was and there never will be such a woman as Griseldis." \*

\* This novel is taken from an ancient MS., entitled *Le Parlement des Dames*. It was versified and represented at Paris

This letter, which Petrarch sent to Boccaccio, accompanied by a Latin translation of his story, is dated, in a MS. of the French king's library, the 8th of June, 1374. It is, perhaps, the last letter which he ever wrote. He complains in it of "mischievous people, who opened packets to read the letters contained in them, and copied what they pleased. Proceeding in their licence, they even spared themselves the trouble of transcription, and kept the packets themselves." Petrarch, indignant at those violators of the rights and confidence of society, took the resolution of writing no more, and bade adieu to his friends and epistolary correspondence, "*Valete amici, valete epistolæ.*"

Petrarch died a very short time after despatching this letter. His biographers and contemporary authors are not agreed as to the day of his demise, but the probability seems to be that it was the 18th of June. Many writers of his life tell us that he expired in the arms of Lombardo da Serico, whom Philip Villani and Gianozzo Manetti make their authority for an absurd tradition connected by the French comedians in the year 1395, under the title of the Mystery of Griseldis, Marchioness of Saluzzo, and printed a long time afterwards by Jean Bonnefons. In Italy, Apostlo Zeno made out of it a small piece for the theatre.

with his death. They pretend that when he breathed his last several persons saw a white cloud, like the smoke of incense, rise to the roof of his chamber, where it stopped for some time and then vanished, a miracle, they add, clearly proving that his soul was acceptable to God, and ascended to heaven. Giovanni Manzini gives a different account. He says that Petrarch's people found him in his library, sitting with his head reclining on a book. Having often seen him in this attitude, they were not alarmed at first; but, soon finding that he exhibited no signs of life, they gave way to their sorrow. This took place on the 19th of July; he is believed to have died in the night of the 18th,\* and, according to Domenico Aretino, who was much attached to Petrarch, and was at that time at Padua, so that he may be regarded as good authority, his death was occasioned by apoplexy.

The news of his decease made a deep impression throughout Italy; and, in the first instance, at Arquà and Padua, and in the cities of the Euganean hills. Their people hastened in crowds to pay their last duties to the man who had honoured

\* This date is inscribed, and is thought by De Sade to be the most credible.

their country by his residence. Francesco da Carrara repaired to Arquà with all his nobility to assist at his obsequies. The bishop went thither with his chapter and with all his clergy, and the common people flocked together to share in the general mourning.

The body of Petrarch, clad in red satin, which was the habit of the canons of Padua, supported by sixteen doctors on a bier covered with cloth of gold bordered with ermine, was carried to the parish church of Arquà, which was fitted up in a manner suitable to the ceremony. After the funeral oration had been pronounced by Bonaventura da Praga, of the order of the hermits of St. Augustin, the corpse was interred in a chapel which Petrarch himself had erected in the parish church in honour of the Virgin. A short time afterwards, Francesco Brossano having caused a tomb of marble to be raised on four pillars opposite to the same church, he transferred the body to that spot, and engraved over it an epitaph in some bad Latin lines, the rhyming of which is their greatest merit. In the year 1637, Paul Valdezucchi, proprietor of the house and grounds of Petrarch at Arquà, caused a bust of bronze to be placed above his mausoleum.

In the year 1630, his monument was violated by some sacrilegious thieves, who carried off some of his bones for the sake of selling them. The Senate of Venice severely punished the delinquents, and by their decree upon the subject testified their deep respect for the remains of this great man.

“I should never finish,” says De Sade, “if I undertook to give an account of all the honours that were offered to Petrarch after his death, and of all the monuments that were erected to his memory. Those who are curious about them may consult Tommasini, who has written a whole chapter on the subject. Poems, or verses, at least, were showered abundantly over his grave.”

All Italy lamented Petrarch, but chiefly his countrymen of Florence, who were best acquainted with his worth. There were three persons in that city who were beyond all others attached to him, namely, John Boccaccio, Father Marsili, and Coluccio Salutati, the last of whom had quitted Avignon at the call of the Florentine Republic to perform the functions of its secretary.

The moment the poet's will was opened, Brosano, his heir, hastened to forward to his friends the little legacies which had been left them ;

among the rest his fifty florins to Boccaccio. The answer of that most interesting man is characteristic of his sensibility, whilst it unhappily shows him to be approaching the close of his life, for he survived Petrarch but a year, in pain and extreme debility. "My first impulse," he says to Brosano, "on hearing of the decease of my master," so he always denominated our poet, "was to have hastened to his tomb to bid him my last adieu, and to mix my tears with your's. But ever since I lectured in public on the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, which is now ten months, I have suffered under a malady which has so weakened and changed me, that you would not recognize me. I have totally lost the stoutness and complexion which I had when you saw me at Venice. My leanness is extreme, my sight is dim, my hands shake, and my knees totter, so that I can hardly drag myself to my country-house at Certaldo, where I only languish. After reading your letter, I wept a whole night for my dear master, not on his own account, for his piety permits us not to doubt that he is now happy, but for myself and for his friends whom he has left in this world, like a vessel in a stormy sea without a



pilot. By my own grief I judge of your's, and of that of Tullia, my beloved sister, your worthy spouse. I envy Arquà the happiness of holding deposited in her soil him whose heart was the abode of the Muses, and the sanctuary of philosophy and eloquence. That village, scarcely known to Padua, will henceforth be famed throughout the world. Men will respect it like Mount Pausilippo, for containing the ashes of Virgil, the shore of the Euxine sea for possessing the tomb of Ovid, and Smyrna for its being believed to be the burial-place of Homer." Among other things, Boccaccio inquires what has become of his divine poem entitled *Africa*, and whether it had been committed to the flames, a fate with which Petrarch, from excess of delicacy, often threatened his compositions.

From this letter it appears that this epic, to which he owed the laurel and no small part of his living reputation, had not yet been published, with the exception of thirty-four verses, which had appeared at Naples through the indiscretion of Barbatus. Boccaccio said that Petrarch kept it continually locked up, and had been several times inclined to burn it. The author of the *Decameron*

himself did not long survive his master ; he died the 21st of December, 1375. Coluccio Salutati communicated the news of his death to Francesco Brossano. In the same letter he solicits for himself a copy of the poem *Africa*, which he knew had been transcribed for Boccaccio, now no more. Brossano sent him a copy, but with a strict injunction not to publish it. Coluccio, though he found many gaps in the *Scipiade*, praises it as a work of incomparable majesty — strange language for a man of taste to use respecting a poem destitute of fire, interest, and invention.

If it was a singular thing that the author of the *Decameron* never showed that best of his productions to Petrarch, it is not less strange that Petrarch never showed his *Scipiade* to Boccaccio. The latter fact can be accounted for by another fact equally certain, namely, that our poet long before his death, or even his old age, had begun to estimate his own epic poem at its true and humble value.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXXI.

Personal Character of Petrarch — His constancy in friendship — Though he was attached to the great, yet he was no sycophant—His benevolence—His self complacency—He was not envious of the fame of Dante — His erudition — Impulse given by him to the study of Geography—His Philosophy imbued with Platonism—Remarks on his Latin Poem, “ Africa,” or the Scipiade—Character of his shorter Latin Poems — His Epistles in Latin Verse—His Latin Prose Epistles—His Essay on Memorable Events—His Treatise on the Remedies for both Extremes of Fortune — His Treatise on a Solitary Life — His Treatise “ De Otio Religiosorum ” — Estimate of Petrarch’s Poetical Character.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

IT seems an invidious task of the biographer that he has no sooner committed his hero to the grave than he must discuss his character with impartiality, which is a virtue not easily practicable, when our subject has been an amiable as well as a great man. But those who leave their memories to posterity, may reckon on paying this tax of posthumous scrutiny with as much certainty as of bequeathing dues to the priest and sexton for their christian burial.

Petrarch will stand this ordeal, perhaps, as well as any man of genius, and better than the most of them. His character, taken all in all, was loveable, and exempt from low and disgusting foibles. There was no craft in his disposition, no malignity that was mean or bitter. It is true, he was angry with the abuses of the church and the scandalous

lives of ecclesiastics; and De Sade and other catholic writers accuse him of carrying his indignation beyond the bounds of justice: but I think it needs no protestant prejudices to make us believe from catholic history itself that the court of Avignon was corrupt, and that her cardinals were, for the most part, profligate. His anger, therefore, admits of excuse.

He was attached to the most powerful men in the leading commonwealths of Italy, and they were mutually attached to him. He thereby increased his influence in society, and his power of being useful to others. For this he has been charged with sycophancy; and the historian of the Italian republics even says that he was "*always a Troubadour.*" If by that designation is meant a vagrant parasite of the rich and powerful, seeking for lucre and love-adventures in every change of place, I differ entirely from Sismondi's moral estimate of our poet. Petrarch was not permanent in his habitation. But his heart was not migratory, either in its love or friendship. In the former affection he was but too constant for his own happiness. In the latter, it must be recollected that his friendships lay not exclusively among the rich

and the powerful ; on the contrary, his Socrates, his Lælius, his Simonides, and his Boccaccio, were men as poor as himself. Burns's words will apply to him that "*well he knew the social glow, and softer flame.*" He duly felt the value of friendship as a heaven-sent manna in the wilderness of life ; and he was never even partially alienated from friends, unless, as in the case of the Colonna, at the more sacred call of public principle. He knew that ancient, broken attachments are a more melancholy spectacle than desolated palaces. They exhibit the heart once lighted up with joy all damp and deserted, and haunted by thoughts that, like birds of ill-omen, nestle only in ruins.

In judging of a human character, we must take a broad and collective view of its physiognomy, and not decide by minute differences from its general expression. The truly great portrait-painter studies, first of all, the predominant physiognomical expression of the face he paints, and does not depend for collective effect on that microscopic elaboration of minute traits, which always leads to exaggeration. Petrarch's moral physiognomy, in the main, was generous and independent. It is unfair, by dwelling on partial exceptions, to con-

vert them into general characteristics. He was not a sycophant to kings and emperors. He spoke out his mind distinctly to them; and they put up with freedoms from him which they would not have endured from one another. Nevertheless, as he owns to us himself, he agreed too easily to live at the court of John Visconti, the would-be tyrant of Italy. John Visconti was a great man, not certainly equal to Napoleon in genius, but still the greatest of his times. Judging by myself, who am no idolater of Bonaparte, I would ask who among us would have grudged a long day's journey during his life to have seen him? nay, who, on a pressing invitation, would not have stopped some days to share his conversation? Yet we are all pretty well agreed that Napoleon had the fault of caring little for human life when it interfered with his ambition. John Visconti had his virtues, as well as the mighty Corsican. He was the Bonaparte of the fourteenth century, and fascinated Petrarch.

I have said that our poet's personal character had a general and redeeming virtue of benevolence. It is too much an error of biographers who wish to be perfectly candid in their estimate of a man to

draw up, as it were, a balance-sheet of his good qualities and defects, placing them like so many pounds sterling in a debtor and creditor account, as if the same qualities in every one man had a positive and equal value with the same qualities in every other man, without relation to the rest of their character. But, in point of fact, the faults and virtues of humanity are not the same in different individuals, but become different according to their mixture and combination. The compassion of a fool may be as essentially compassion as that of a wise man ; but it is not the same virtue when compounded with folly, as when it meets and mixes with wisdom. There is a moral chemistry in the combining materials of our spiritual nature which is not to be judged of mechanically, according to the disunited qualities of those materials. The *tertium quid* produced by mixture varies according to its adverse ingredients. An idiot may be brave, but the intelligent alone can be heroic. In like manner, the self-complacency of a kind-hearted man, how unlike it is in the result of his total character to the vanity of a malignant egotist !

Self-complacency, I conceive, may be set down



without uncharitableness, as the chief foible of Petrarch. I cannot concede to his unqualified admirers either that he was free from this defect, or, with all his greatness and gentleness, that the defect became him. I may be asked to quote distinct proofs of this foible from his writings, and such proofs are certainly to be found; but they lie scattered over many passages, and impress us rather collectively, from the full perusal of his life, than from single instances. If I were merely to quote, therefore, a few of those egotistical passages, I might be lenient towards Petrarch, but should not do justice to my own opinion, which has been formed by consecutive impressions from his writings, minute in themselves, but numerous and strong from their constant recurrence. It is a mistake to suppose that self-complacency can sit with grace on any man, let him be great or small; there is a dignity in the self-forgetfulness of genius, far beyond any charm in its most vivid consciousness.

But Petrarch's self-complacency was unmixed with gall or envy; and, when blended with the kindly elements of his nature, it lost all the offensiveness that it would have had in a waspish character. I do not believe the surmise that he

envied Dante's fame. I am aware that Boccaccio, in sending a copy of the *Divina Commedia* to our poet, seems to hint a suspicion that the latter judged harshly of Dante, and Ugo Foscolo says that Petrarch was angry at being considered jealous of a poet "whose language is coarse, though his conceptions are lofty." But the circumstance of a man being angry at an accusation is not a proof that he is guilty. Boccaccio might hint that Petrarch judged harshly of his great precursor, because his poems were not in the library of Vaucluse; but Petrarch has satisfactorily accounted for that circumstance, as having been merely accidental. Besides, supposing our poet to have judged harshly of Dante in the opinion of Boccaccio, it does not imply that Boccaccio charged him with envy. If Petrarch thought that "*Dante's language is coarse, though his thoughts are lofty*," he had a right to express an opinion, which should rather be called candid than invidious.

As regards his literary character, Petrarch was not, nor, in the nature of things, could he be, so pure a Latinist, either in verse or prose, as the greatest scholars of a subsequent period. He desired, and, in a general view, was able to model his style on

that of the purest Roman classics. But, from habitually reading the fathers of the church, he clung insensibly to their phraseology, which was more appropriate to his subjects; and, public affairs being at that time transacted in Latin, he could not always reject those barbarisms in the language which had been sanctioned by the adoption of all the universities, and were more intelligible to his readers than a Ciceronian style. Nevertheless, he was for his age profoundly learned, and his erudition, like his poetical genius, gave a momentous impulse to the progress of letters. It warred with the sloth of ignorant times, and prepared their eyes for the future and broader lights of literature, whilst the daybreak of erudition fell on his poetry like light on the lyre of Memnon, and sweetened the act of wakening to the sleeper.

I have allowed that there is a peculiarity in his prose writings, particularly in his epistles, which is a fault to us, though it was not disliked by his contemporaries. I mean that plethorism of classical allusions which, in a modern author, would amount to pedantry. But in him it was relatively natural, and arose out of his circumstances. He threw

himself on the hospitality of the ancients, as one of the first guests who had travelled back to them from modern times; he was transported with his reception; and his grateful spirit became half ancient and classical in all its thoughts and associations. The same fondness for illustrating every point of morality by Roman examples would savour of the pedagogue in modern times; but, in that age, such illustrations were devoured with greediness.

He so far succeeded in clearing the road to the study of antiquities, as to deserve the title which he justly retains of the restorer of classical learning; nor did his enthusiasm for ancient monuments prevent him from describing them with critical taste. He gave an impulse to the study of geography by his *Itinerarium Syriacum*. That science had been partially revived in the preceding century, by the publication of Marco Polo's travels, and journeys to distant countries had been accomplished more frequently than before, not only by religious missionaries, but by pilgrims who travelled from purely rational curiosity; but both of these classes of travellers, especially the religionists, dealt profusely in the marvellous; and their falsehoods were farther exaggerated by copyists, who wished to

profit by the sale of MSS. describing their adventures. As an instance of the doubtful wonders related by wayfaring men, may be noticed what is told of Octorico da Pordenone, who met, at Trebizond, with a man who had trained four thousand partridges to follow him on journeys for three days together, who gathered around like chickens when he slept, and who returned home after he had sold to the emperor as many of them as his imperial majesty chose to select.

The best antidote to this love of fables was to facilitate travelling by guide-books, descriptive of the best routes to be taken in order to increase the number of travellers, so that their accounts might be a check upon one another. Petrarch, though he had at one time intended a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, never actually performed it ; but his guide-book must have been of some importance to those who were setting out for the East.

It would be difficult, if possible, to discover any system of philosophy in Petrarch's writings, or to pronounce in what philosophical school he ought to be classed. In a general view, he may be called the disciple of Cicero and of Seneca, both of whom he imitated, and the latter so frequently that he

was, in derision, denominated his ape. He may, also, to a certain degree, be considered a Platonist, inasmuch as he held the theory of Plato, that the perfection of love was a rapturous trance of the soul, abstracted from all animal passion. To be sure, the poet himself was not at all times entirely etherial in his love of Laura, especially when she found it necessary to check him by her memorable words — “I am not what you suppose me to be.” But when Laura declined in beauty, and Petrarch became an ascetic, it is not impossible that his love grew nearly as Platonic as her’s always appears to have been. At the same time, though he affected the *transcendental* in his amatory strains, yet, after all, he painted the passion like an earthly landscape losing its lucid summits mysteriously in the sky. He imbued his poetry with the idea that our souls, emanating from God, and returning to him again, are pre-existent to our bodies in other worlds. The most tender and beautiful of them inhabit the planet Venus in the third heaven. When they come to earth, each soul burns to find its companion; and their love is the more ardent for this cause, that the matter which encloses them prevents their re-union. In this terrestrial world,

their sufferings and ecstasies are inexpressible ; but a celestial light burns in their eyes. They know that they are predestined to be ultimately united : in proportion as they meditate on this predestination, their hearts feel less tendency to earth, and they mutually excite each other to the purification of their virtue, so that, in the ratio of their love to each other, they are lifted towards God.

These dreamy conceptions, partly emanating from Plato, were propagated by the fathers of the Church, who had imbibed them in the Alexandrian school of Egypt. But, though Petrarch imbibed them, no historian of Platonic philosophy would set him down as one of its modern restorers. He was not scholar enough to study Greek philosophy in its original language ; and, at that period, the doctrines both of Plato and Aristotle were grossly misrepresented in translation. Men held out as Platonic philosophy ideas which had never entered into the head of Plato : and, in like manner, when Petrarch disputes the authority of Aristotle, he is, for the most part, in point of fact, not attacking the Stagyrte himself, but those who misunderstood him and counterfeited his authority. If Aristotle

could have come back in the middle ages, and seen the system of his supposed opinions entitled "Aristoteles Redivivus," he would have said — "You have revived the wrong man."

In the chronology of Petrarch's writings, undoubtedly some of his sonnets were his earliest adult compositions; but his Latin epic poem *Africa*, or the *Scipiade*, was the first great work which he undertook. Though it proved, in the end, only an ambitious failure, and was never, indeed, published as a whole during his lifetime, the anticipated grandeur of this poem seems to have spread his renown even wider than his Italian strains, and to have contributed, in no small degree, to his obtaining the laurel. But Petrarch lived long enough, even in spite of a thousand congratulations on this epic, to be conscious that he could found no hopes of enduring glory on his *Scipiade*. Whilst the world was wondering, by anticipation, at this "*nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade*,"\* and whilst

\* These words are part of a complimentary poem that were written by an admiring contemporary of Virgil in the anticipation of his expected *Æneid*. "A something, I know not what, greater than the *Iliad*, is on the eve of coming forth." They are commonly mistaken as meaning that there is no poem greater than the *Iliad*.



the lovers of literature were greedy to get only a fragment of it into their libraries, he was pining with too much certainty that it wanted claims to immortality, and, on hearing some of its lines repeated at Verona, he burst into tears.

I am not prepared to say that no grammar containing a guide to Latin prosody existed at that period; but I believe there did not, and that Petrarch sat down to his Roman versification worse provided with rules for the quantities of syllables than a schoolboy at this day sets about his Latin verse theme with his *Gradus ad Parnassum* beside him. Latin, though no longer a living language, was still employed in public business, and in the correspondence of the learned; but its pronunciation had been changed during the lapse of centuries; and the corruptions of its prosody, having become familiar to the ear, very easily eluded a modern Latin versifier. The wonder is that Petrarch had so few faults of quantity. His casual lapses from the purity of the old Roman language thus appear to be venial; and they would be still more so, if fire and feeling and sagacious design shone through his epic poetry. But when it is asked if there be not *some* fine passages in his *Scipiade*, the melancholy answer

must be given, that there are some;\* but they are short and far between, and no more adequate to ransom the total unhappiness of the work than a few brilliant touches of colour to redeem the shapeless drawing of a large and heavy picture. For action and stirring narrative he substitutes fine but uninteresting dialogues. All his supernatural machinery is comprised in the two first books—if we can call supernatural the circumstance of a young hero dreaming that his father (Publius Scipio) appears to him, and, after relating the events of the first Punic war, predicts the success of the second, and gives him sage advice about the salvation of his country.

All that can be said in favour of the *Scipiade* is

\* In the fifth book, for instance, the grief and love of Sophonisba's lover are touchingly portrayed:—

Volvitur inde thoro \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Uritur, invigilant moeror, metus, ira, furorque

Saepe et absentem lachrymans dum stringit amicam,

Saepe thoro dedit amplexus et dulcia verba.

Postquam nulla valent violento frena dolori,

Incipit et longis solatur damna querelis,

Cara mihi nimium, vita mihi dulcior omni,

Sophonisba, vale.

The third book also contains something imposing in the description of the magnificent court of the Moorish king Syphax.

that it may be compared advantageously with any Latin poetry of his contemporaries ; but, as to its positive beauties, they are not even so valuable as those few happy touches which we may imagine to be discoverable in some large and ill-designed picture, because, in such a production, the canvass is at once spread before us ; and the meritorious traits, be they ever so faint and few, are briefly perceptible ; whereas, in this poem, we have to wade, in a long day's reading, through seven thousand verses for the chance of meeting with a few lines in a thousand that are worth commending. He must be a poor critic whose time is not too valuable to be spent in such unprofitable gold-finding. Poetry should come to us in masses of ore that require little sifting.

Petrarch's shorter Latin poems are more interesting, because they are short, and because they refer, under fictitious names, to the most remarkable events and illustrious personages of his own age. Some of them are valuable as contemporaneous historical satires. In the sixth and the seventh eclogues, Clement VI. is presented disguised under the name Mitio (from the Latin word *mitis*). In the former of these pastorals, Panfilo, or the

friend of all, meaning St. Peter, vituperates Mitio for his carelessness about the flock that has been entrusted to him, and asks the gentle shepherd what has become of the rich plains that had been allowed for their pasture, and what is done with the profits of his fold. Mitio responds that the gold produced by the sale of the lambs is reserved for purchasing costly cups, which alone are fit to be used by the higher shepherds of God's flock, as those worthies cannot put to their lips the coarse, red vessels used by their forefathers. The sale of the lambs, too, defrayed the expense of those superb dresses which the same shepherds had adopted in place of the simple toggery of their ancestors. "The milking of the flock," Mitio adds, "had procured for him powerful friends. His wife, Epy, meaning the city of Avignon, very unlike the wife of Panfilo, or St. Peter, was shining all over with gold and jewels. Meanwhile the goats and rams go skipping about the meadows, and he himself, (Mitio) softly seated, delights to see their playfulness. Panfilo is at last provoked to tell this culpable and effeminate shepherd that he deserves chains, and beating, and eternal imprisonment. The dispute rises to anger. Mitio, who had hitherto kept his temper, in con-

formity with his name, gets nettled in his turn, and tells St. Peter that he is an ungrateful tyrant towards those who are devoted to him, even to martyrdom. For his own part, he is determined to live where he is, in the arms of his wife Epy, Avignon, on whose beauty he expatiates, and which Clement VI. had not the resolution to abandon." The seventh eclogue is an uxurious dialogue between Mitio and Epy., i. e., Pope Clement VI. and Avignon. The eighth eclogue is entitled *Divortium*, or the Divorce, and allegorically describes the coolness and quarrel that took place between our poet and Cardinal Colonna, when the former told his patron that at the age of forty he found himself ill-provided for, and that he was determined to remove to Italy. The speakers are Ganimede, meaning Cardinal Colonna and Amyclas, meaning Petrarch. Why the old Cardinal is named after the boy-favourite of Jupiter is not explained.

The character of these eclogues is wholly allegorical, sometimes so enigmatical as to be unintelligible, and they jumble together Pagan and Christian mythology unsparingly. Where they can be understood, they are curiously allusive to Petrarch's life and times, and they might be con-

sulted with advantage by an historian tracing up minutely to their source the first springs of the Reformation, but they have no more poetry than the ten commandments. His three books of epistles in Latin verse are, upon the whole, more pleasant reading than his *unpastoral* pastorals, particularly those which are addressed to his intimate friends, Lælius, Socrates, Boccaccio, Guglielmo da Pastrengo, Barbato di Salmone, and the good Father Dionisio. Ginguéné thinks that, in these effusions, he imitated Horace. If he did so, I can trace no resemblance to the original; but there are traits of a sweet Petrarchan spirit which are as agreeable as if they were Horatian. Those letters throw now and then some light on his private life. In one of them he makes a confession to Barbato almost prophetic of his final despair about his poem on Africa.

————— Memor ergo precium, dilecte, tuarum,  
 Institui exiguam sparsim tibi mittere partem  
 Carminis . . . .  
 Perlege—cognosces animum sine viribus alas  
 Ingenii explicuisse leves; *nam vera fatebor*  
*Implumem taepido praeceps me Gloria nido*  
*Expulit et caelo jussit volitare remoto.*  
 Poenitet incepti cursum revocare juventae.

The image of Glory, like the parent eagle pushing him from her nest, like many of her progeny, to try his wings too soon, is a Petrarchan more than an Horatian idea.

Some of the same epistles are addressed to great personages, such as Popes Benedict XII. and Clement VI., but they are political satires, not effusions of the heart, and deserve to be marched back to the dark ranks of his emblematic eclogues. When we read the title, for instance, of his verse-letter to Benedict, we naturally ask what epistolary correspondence Petrarch could have had with that pontiff, who was none of his favourites. The answer is, that he addresses his holiness, not in his own character, but in that of the city of Rome, imploring his protection. With these exceptions, those verse-epistles are agreeable from their freedom and amenity, and from being addressed to personal friends.

Still more valuable than his Latin verses are his prose-epistles in the same language. They please us in translation by their thoughts and substance, and who would therefore concern himself about their classical style. His biographer, De Sade, has given so many of them, that it would be need-

less for me to search for more. If Petrarch's poetry were annihilated or forgotten, he would still deserve to be remembered as an epistolary writer. I know nothing in the shape of a traveller's letters more striking than his description of the court of Naples after the death of King Robert, and of the storm at Naples. His manner of writing is the more eloquent that it never seems intended to be so.

In the solitude of Vacluse he undertook and finished his essay on memorable events — *Rerum memorandarum*. Here we must judge of him leniently as an historian. He sat down to his task unfurnished with the thousand and one volumes which modern literature would have afforded him. He was a mere pioneer in the modern history of ancient times. Of his whole prose works there are more than eleven hundred folio pages in the Basle edition, printed in 1581. They would occupy a reader for nearly four months, at the rate of a full hour a day. It is a heavy responsibility, therefore, to render even a light account of them. I find it impossible to ascertain the dates of every one of them. Neither De Sade nor Baldelli has been able to do so; but the period at which he



wrote his most important letters and ethical essays can be easily fixed.

His treatise, *De Remediis Utriusque Fortunæ* — On the Remedies for both Extremes of Fortune — was one of his great undertakings in the solitude of Vacluse, though it was not finished till many years afterwards, when it was dedicated to Azzo Correggio. Here he borrows, of course, largely from the ancients; at the same time he treats us to some observations on human nature sufficiently original to keep his work from the dryness of plagiarism. Nevertheless, he obeys the barbarism of his age in making the speakers of his dialogue allegorical personages, namely, Grief, Reason, and Fear. This treatise, “*De Remediis*,” contains some imposing declamation. In one passage it reminds me of that spirited ode of Sir William Jones’s, beginning, “*What constitutes a state*,” when Grief, as one of the interlocutors, says, “I am the citizen of an ignoble country!” Reason answers, “Then try to make your country greater. Nothing raises the glory of states so much as the virtue of its citizens. He is deceived who thinks that the grandeur of a state depends on the beauty of its buildings, or the fertility of its

soil, on its riches, its antiquities, its towers, its walls and palaces, its pictures, statues, gold and gems, its camps of victorious legions, its harbours, that are the emporium of commerce, its fleets, that navigate to earth's farthest shores, the luxury and purple robes of its inhabitants; but the virtue and the fame of good deeds, which is produced by men, and not by battlements."

The greatest objection to his ethical theory is, that he wrestles with a difficulty invincible in its nature, namely, that of consoling us for evils which admit of little or no consolation. A few general maxims may be usefully recollected in adversity, but they are very few and very general. We may appeal to the pride of the unfortunate, and remind them that complaints can only engender pity, which is allied to contempt. We may shew them, by the analogy of material to moral things, that the burthen is less heavy when it is skilfully poised and borne. But the stock of these solacing generalities is speedily exhausted, and, when they are gone, nothing remains to the self-called philosopher, our Job's comforter, but disgusting sophistication. Petrarch attempts to prove that poverty and deformity are rather blessings than otherwise. This

is insulting human infirmity. Our nature may often make us too querulous, yet, as physical torture is somewhat alleviated by crying out, so our moral pain seeks a natural vent in lamenting our destiny, and to stop our complaints would be perhaps as cruel as to stifle the cries of agony.

His treatise on "*A Solitary Life*" was written as an apology for his own love of retirement—I say retirement, not solitude, for Petrarch had the social feeling too strongly in his nature to desire a perfect hermitage. He loved to have a friend now and then beside him, to whom he might say how sweet is solitude. Even his deepest retirement in the "shut-up valley" was occasionally visited by dear friends, with whom his discourse was so interesting that they wandered in the woods so long and so far, that the servant could not find them to announce that their dinner was ready. In his rapturous praises of living alone, our poet, therefore, says more than he sincerely meant; he liked retirement, to be sure, but then it was with somebody within reach of him, like the young lady, in Miss Porter's novel, who was fond of solitude, and walked much in Hyde Park by herself, with her footman behind her.

The basis of his argument is, that man ought to strive after perfection. Well, that object is laudable, at least, for we may be the better for straining after consummate virtue, though we never can reach it. "But our virtue," Petrarch says, "is obstructed by the corruption of cities, where passions and temptations distract us, in spite of ourselves. We must therefore resort to rural solitude, in order to keep us in mind of our civil and religious duties. Now, whether Petrarch's love of another man's wife was a civil or a religious duty, it was a passion which his retirement seems to have cherished rather than subdued. *Quoque magis tegitur tectus magis estuat ignis.* Our hero's declamation against cities is as unsubstantial as that which Rousseau raised against them in the last century. What would these rustic sentimentalists be at? would they stop the growth of cities, and the progress of arts, sciences, and population? In order to give every man a rural solitude, you must drown half the children that are born. Under the sanction of no science, real or pretended, has more nonsense been spoken, than under the name of moral philosophy.

His treatise *De Otio Religiosorum* was written

in 1353, after an agreeable visit to his brother, who was a monk. It is a commendation of the monastic life. He may be found, I dare say, to exaggerate the blessings of that mode of life which, in proportion to our increasing activity and intelligence, has sunk in the estimation of protestant society, so that we compare the whole monkish fraternity with the drones in a hive, an *ignavum pecus*, whom the other bees are right in expelling. Yet we who are protestants may perhaps judge with prejudice respecting the benefits which society derived from monasteries in elder times. Monasteries provided for the poor antecedent to our poor laws. The monastic life offered retirement in a social form. Its inmates performed its superstitious rites in social co-operation. When they rose at matins, they had at least the comfort of saying good morning; or, if they were Trappists and bound to silence, they could at least look as much as to say so. The monastery must have been a comfortable asylum for elderly catholics, whose worldly passions had cooled, and whose piety had warmed with increasing age. It brought together, for the most part, men better educated than the vulgar, whose conversation was a solace to each

other. Many of the monks cultivated literature; and, though their libraries were too often the tombs of ancient MSS., they sometimes transcribed and revived them. The monks, as corporate bodies, possessed lands, and it was observed that they were the best of landlords, and that their lands were the best cultivated. Finally, in the midst of the bloodiest wars, they were refuges for the unfortunate, and, if they were once in half a century violated, they were fifty times respected.

I feel as if I could dwell at greater length on the ethical prose works of Petrarch, if I had the power of inspiring my reader with a similar interest. But I despair of having the ability to do so. This is not the reader's fault, nor is it Petrarch's, but simply my own misfortune. I cannot give up the subject, however, without recommending to the attention of some future and better biographer of Petrarch his address, and, at the same time, his boldness, in political writing. His *Essay de Optima administranda Republica* was dedicated to one of the veriest tyrants of Italy, yet he tells him many wholesome truths without the appearance of giving offence.

One circumstance fills me with distrust of being able to render entire justice to the Italian poet, in so many respects exquisite, which is, that I can make no atonement for any fault that I may find with him by any counter-manifestation of his beauties. A reader will take the critic's word, with slender proving, for any fault alleged against a poet; but, in order to be penetrated with a sense of his super-prevailing merits, he must have evidence in some adequate translation of the works of that foreign poet, if the reader be an Englishman little or not at all imbued with the foreign language. Now, where shall we apply for the means of rendering such justice to Petrarch? We have Homer and Dante transferred, as it were, soul and body into English; but who has succeeded in fully transferring Petrarch's graces into our tongue? The very genius of the two languages seems unpropitious to the task of translating an Italian into an English sonnet. The former seems a flower too delicate to prosper in the stormy climate of our speech.

Nevertheless, though I shall never pretend to be the translator of Petrarch, I recoil not, after writing his Life, from giving a sincere account of

the impression which his poetry produces on my mind. I have studied the Italian language with assiduity, though perhaps at a later period of my life than enables the ear to be *perfectly* sensitive to its harmony, for it is in youth, nay, almost in childhood alone, that the melody and felicitous expressions of any tongue can touch our deepest sensibility; but still I have studied it with pains—I can relish Dante, I think, to his highest value; I can perceive much in Petrarch that is elevated and tender; and I approach the subject unconscious of the slightest splenetic prejudice.

M. Sismondi, \* I am quite sure, no more wrote about Petrarch in haste or spleen, or the love of singularity, than I do. Yet he says something about being ashamed at his dissenting from the general enthusiasm respecting Petrarch's amatory poetry. I may have, upon the whole, a higher idea of this poet than Sismondi; yet I agree so cordially with some of his remarks, that, when he blushes for his own opinions, I should desire him to blush for mine by proxy, unless I thought conscientious opinions above all blame or shame.

I have certainly felt, in the perusal of Petrarch's

\* History of Italian Literature.



amatory sonnets, sensations exceedingly different in the degree of respect for him which they inspire. When I found him describing himself haunted, not metaphorically, but optically and corporeally, by the image of his absent mistress, and comparing the sacredness of her birthplace to the Bethlehem, where our Saviour was born, I have not been able to banish a momentary suspicion that this was madness, which, if it had not run upon love, would have taken some other subject. The passages, however, which excited this conception, are not numerous, and the entranced features of his muse seldom lose their loveliness in these sybilline contortions. Laura ever and anon presents herself, a minute picture, to the mind's eye — her very veil and mantle, her features, her smile, her step—and we are in love with Laura. I must say, however, that we are rather smitten by her outward beauty than rapt into interest with her mind. Dante contrives, one scarcely can tell by what insensible traits, to make us the fond friends of his Beatrice, as well as to admire her; but what do we know of the secrets of Laura's heart? Her being too pure to be seduced might arise, as I suspect it did, from coldness towards Petrarch, and poetry coming to

the aid of her discretion ; but what struggles of sensibility she had to encounter, or whether she had any sensibility at all, is very much left to our conjecture.

Again, there is a sameness in the fluctuations of his amatory feelings, which is scarcely more amusing than if they had no fluctuations at all. His heart is a love-thermometer of hope and despair, which rises and falls between their extreme points, though generally inclining to the melancholy zero. A spice of jealousy for a suspected rival, or a tone of anger, methinks, would sometimes relieve this monotony, like a discord in harmony, that makes music seem more natural. There are times when all lovers are naturally enemies.

I demur to calling him the first of modern poets who refined and dignified the language of love. Dante had certainly set him the example. It is true that, compared with his brothers of classical antiquity in love-poetry, he appears like an Abel of purity offering innocent incense at the side of so many Cains making their carnal sacrifices. Tibullus alone anticipates his tenderness. At the same time, while Petrarch is purer than those classical lovers, he is never so natural as they some-

times are when their passages are least objectionable, and the sun-bursts of his real, manly, and natural human love seem to me often to come to us struggling through the clouds of Platonism.

I will not expatiate on the *concetti* that may be objected to in many of his sonnets, for they are so often in such close connexion with exquisitely fine thoughts, that, in tearing away the weed, we might be in danger of snapping the flower.

I feel little inclined, besides, to dwell on Petrarch's faults with that feline dilation of vision which sees in the dark what would escape other eyes in daylight, for, if I could make out the strongest critical case against him, I should still have to answer this question, "How comes it that Petrarch's poetry, in spite of all these faults, has been the favourite of the world for nearly five hundred years?"

We know, to be sure, that false belief, with all the perverted feelings which it entails, may reign among mankind for thousands of years. False religions have had that permanence. It is, moreover, too true that there is not only a conscientious religion in our taste for poetry, a pure, devoted love of truth, but sometimes also, and more than

sometimes, in vulgar minds, an hereditary bigotry and a spiteful contentment in mistake, so that false poetical reputations may last a long time. But still false literary taste has no strong basis for its continuance. It has no established church, and no state payments or persecutions to support it: It leaves the enlightened votary of taste without the alternative of being crowned with a mitre for his faith, or having his disbelieving tongue bored for blasphemy with a red-hot iron. There is, therefore, every probability of poetical taste being sincere in proportion to its duration, and of being true in proportion to its sincerity.

So strong a regard for Petrarch is rooted in the mind of Italy, that his renown has grown up like an oak which has reached maturity amidst the storms of ages, and fears not decay from revolving centuries. One of the high charms of his poetical language is its pure and melting melody, a charm untransferable to any more northern tongue. Even in German, a still harsher language than English, the ear often luxuriates in the *singbarkeit*, or singableness, if we might coin such an English word, which the poet's art can elicit, and he wonders that the collocation of syllables can produce a mo-

saic of sounds so sweet to the ear. But the vocal Ausonian speech carries this spell of melody still higher. It is true that no conformation of words will charm the ear unless they bring silent thoughts of corresponding sweetness to the mind ; nor could the most sonorous, vapid verses be changed into poetry if they were set to the music of the Spheres. It is scarcely necessary, however, to say that Petrarch has intellectual graces of thought and spiritual felicities of diction, without which his tactics in the mere march of words would be a worthless skill.

## LIFE OF PETRARCH.

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### CHAPTER XXXII.

Petrarch's Passion for Laura—Two Schools in modern Italian criticism, the Petrarchists and Danteists—Ugo Foscolo's estimate of Petrarch's Poetical Character—Difficulty of translating Petrarch's Italian Poetry—Monotony of his Sonnets—Specimens of them—Subject of his Trionfi—Summary of Petrarch's Character, moral, political, and poetical.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

THE love of Petrarch was misplaced, but its utterance was at once so fervid and delicate, and its enthusiasm so enduring, that the purest minds feel justified in abstracting from their consideration the unhappiness of the attachment, and attending only to its devout fidelity. Among his deepest admirers we shall find women of virtue above suspicion, who are willing to forget his Laura being married, or to forgive the circumstance for the eloquence of his courtship and the unwavering faith of his affection. Nor is this predilection for Petrarch the result of female vanity and the mere love of homage. No; it is a wise instinctive consciousness in women that the offer of love to them, without enthusiasm, refinement, and *constancy*, is of no value at all. Without these qualities in their

wooers, they are the slaves of the stronger sex. It is no wonder, therefore, that they are grateful to Petrarch for holding up the perfect image of a lover, and that they regard him as a friend to that passion, on the delicacy and constancy of which the happiness, the most hallowed ties, and the very continuance of the species depend.

In modern Italian criticism there are two schools of taste, whose respective partizans may be called the Petrarchists and the Danteists. The latter allege that Petrarch's amatory poetry, from its platonic and mystic character, was best suited to the age of cloisters, of dreaming voluptuaries, and of men living under tyrannical governments, whose thoughts and feelings were oppressed and disguised. The genius of Dante, on the other hand, they say, appeals to all that is bold and natural in the human breast, and they trace the grand revival of his popularity in our own times to the re-awakened spirit of liberty. On this side of the question the most eminent Italian scholars and poets are certainly ranged. The most gifted man of that country with whom I was ever personally acquainted, Ugo Foscolo, was a vehement Danteist. Yet his copious memory was well stored with many a son-



net of Petrarch's, which he could repeat by heart ; and, with all his Danteism, he infused the deepest tones of admiration into his recitation of the Petrarchan sonnets.

And altogether, Foscolo, though a cautious, is a candid admirer of our poet. He says, " the harmony, elegance; and perfection of his poetry are the result of long labour ; but its original conceptions and pathos always sprang from the sudden inspiration of a deep and powerful passion. By an attentive perusal of all the writings of Petrarch, it may be reduced almost to a certainty that, by dwelling perpetually on the same ideas, and by allowing his mind to prey incessantly on itself, the whole train of his feelings and reflections acquired one strong character and tone, and, if he was ever able to suppress them for a time, they returned to him with increased violence ; that, to tranquillize this agitated state of his mind, he, in the first instance, communicated, in a free and loose manner, all that he thought and felt, in his correspondence with his intimate friends ; that he afterwards reduced these narratives, with more order and description, into Latin verse ; and that he, lastly, perfected them with a greater profusion of imagery

and more art in his Italian poetry, the composition of which at first served only, as he frequently says, to divert and mitigate all his afflictions. We may thus understand the perfect concord which prevails in Petrarch's poetry between Nature and Art; between the accuracy of fact and the magic of invention; between depth and perspicuity; between devouring passion and calm meditation. In three or four verses of Italian he often condenses the description and concentrates the fire which fill a page of his elegies and letters in Latin. It is precisely because the poetry of Petrarch originally sprang from the heart that his passion never seems fictitious or cold, notwithstanding the profuse ornament of his style, or the metaphysical elevation of his thoughts. In the movement of Laura's eyes he sees a light which points out the way to Heaven.

Gentil mia donna, io veggio  
Nel mover de' vostri occhi un dolce lume,  
Che mi mostra la via che al Ciel conduce.

He exclaims that the atmosphere becomes smiling, luminous, and serene at her approach; that the air which is breathed around her is so purified by the celestial radiance of her countenance, that, while

he fixes his eyes upon her, every sensual desire is extinguished. Still he is always natural. Few lovers, indeed, could have conceived these ideas; yet the fire and the facility with which they are expressed render them instantly familiar to the reader's imagination. In the art of forming new and evident images, either of the most simple or abstract ideas, Petrarch is as happy as he is original. To express the common-place thought that his poetry and the beauty of Laura would be remembered after their death, 'I see in fancy,' says he, 'a silent tongue and two fair eyes, though closed, still beaming with light, surviving us.'"

I have the more right to be excused for quoting largely from Ugo Foscolo, because he is not only a writer of strong poetic feeling as well as philosophic judgment, but he is pre-eminent in that Italian critical school who see the merits of Petrarch in no exaggerated light, but, on the whole, prefer Dante to him as a poet. Petrarch's love-poetry, Foscolo remarks, may be considered as the intermediate link between that of the classics and the moderns. \* \* \* \* Petrarch both feels like the ancient, and philosophises like the modern poets. When he paints after the manner of the

classics, he is equal to them. Laura soars to heaven; angels and blessed souls descend to meet her, and, while she looks back upon earth, she seems to pause in her ærial way.

Ad or ad or se volge a tergo

Mirando s'io la seguo : e par che aspetti.

The poet could not give us a greater proof of the force and purity of Laura's passion than by delaying her flight to heaven in the expectation of her lover. But, whenever he has occasion to express abstract ideas, or to dive into the depth of the heart, he uses every effort of his art that his observations may pass across our mind with the flash and rapidity of lightning.

I despair of ever seeing in English verse a translation of Petrarch's Italian poetry that shall be adequate and popular. The term adequate, of course, always applies to the translation of genuine poetry in a subdued sense. It means the best that can be expected, after making allowance for that escape of ætherial spirit which is inevitable in the transfer of poetic thoughts from one language to another. The word popular is also to be taken in a limited meaning regarding all translations. Cowper's ballad of John Gilpin is twenty times

more popular than his Homer ; yet the latter work is deservedly popular in comparison with the bulk of translations from antiquity. The same thing may be said of Carey's Dante ; it is like Cowper's Homer, as adequate and popular as translated poetry can be expected to be. Yet I doubt if either of those poets could have succeeded so well with Petrarch. Lady Dacre has shewn much grace and ingenuity in the passages of our poet, which she has versified ; but she could not transfer into English those graces of Petrarchan diction, which are mostly intransferable. She could not bring the Italian language along with her.

Is not this, it may be asked, a proof that Petrarch is not so genuine a poet as Homer and Dante, since his charm depends upon the delicacies of diction that evaporate in the transfer from tongue to tongue, more than on hardy thoughts that will take root in any language to which they are transplanted ? In a general view, I agree with this proposition ; yet, what we call felicitous diction can never have a potent charm without refined thoughts, which, like essential odours, may be too impalpable to bear transfusion. Burns has the happiest imaginable Scottish diction ; yet,

what true Scotsman would bear to see him *done* into French? And, with the exception of German, what language has done justice to Shakespeare?

The reader must be a true Petrarchist who is unconscious of a general similarity in the character of his sonnets, which, in the long perusal of them, amounts to monotony. At the same time, it must be said that this monotonous similarity impresses the mind of Petrarch's reader exactly in proportion to the slenderness of his acquaintance with the poet. Does he approach Petrarch's sonnets for the first time, they will probably appear to him all as like to each other as the sheep of a flock; but, when he becomes more familiar with them, he will perceive an interesting individuality in every sonnet, and will discriminate their individual character as precisely as the shepherd can distinguish every single sheep of his flock by its voice and face. It would be rather tedious to pull out, one by one, all the sheep and lambs of our poet's flock of sonnets, and to enumerate the varieties of their bleat; and though, by studying the subject half his lifetime, a man might classify them by their main characteristics, he would find them defy a perfect

classification, as they often blend different qualities. Some of them have a uniform expression of calm and beautiful feeling. Others breathe ardent and almost hopeful passion. Others again shew him jealous, despondent, or despairing ; sometimes gloomily, and sometimes with touching resignation. But a great many of them have a mixed character, where, in the space of a line, he passes from one mood of mind to another.

As an example of pleasing and calm reflection, I would cite the first of his sonnets, according to the order in which they are usually printed. It is singular to find it confessing the poet's shame at the retrospect of so many years spent.

*Fra le vane speranze e'l van dolore.*

Ye who shall hear amidst my scattered lays  
The sighs with which I fanned and fed my heart,  
When, young and glowing, I was but in part  
The man I am become in later days ;  
Ye who have marked the changes of my style  
From vain despondency to hope as vain,  
From him among you, who has felt love's pain,  
I hope for pardon, ay, and pity's smile,  
Though conscious, now, my passion was a theme,  
Long, idly dwelt on by the public tongue,  
I blush for all the vanities I've sung,  
And find the world's applause a fleeting dream.

The following sonnet (cxxvi)\* is such a gem of Petrarchan and Platonic homage to beauty that I subjoin my translation of it with the most sincere avowal of my conscious inability to do it justice.

In what ideal world or part of heaven  
 Did Nature find the model of that face  
 And form, so fraught with loveliness and grace,  
 In which, to our creation, she has given  
 Her prime proof of creative power above ?  
 What fountain nymph or goddess ever let  
 Such lovely tresses float of gold refined  
 Upon the breeze, or in a single mind,  
 Where have so many virtues ever met,  
 E'en though those charms have slain my bosom's weal ?  
 He knows not love who has not seen her eyes  
 Turn when she sweetly speaks, or smiles, or sighs,  
 Or how the power of love can hurt or heal.

Sonnet lxviii is remarkable for the fineness of its closing thought.

Time was her tresses by the breathing air  
 Were wreath'd to many a ringlet golden bright,  
 Time was her eyes diffused unmeasured light,  
 Though now their lovely beams are waxing rare,  
 Her face methought that in its blushes shew'd  
 Compassion, her angelic shape and walk,  
 Her voice that seem'd with Heaven's own speech to talk,  
 At these, what wonder that my bosom glowed !

\* Polidori's edition of Petrarch, published in London, 1796.



A living sun she seemed—a spirit of Heaven.  
 Those charms decline : but does my passion ? No !  
 I love not less —the slackening of the bow  
 Assuages not the wound its shaft has given.

The following sonnet is remarkable for its last four lines having puzzled all the poet's commentators to explain what he meant by the words "Al man ond'io scrivo è fatta amica, a questo volta." I agree with De Sade in conjecturing that Laura in receiving some of his verses had touched the hand that presented them, in token of her gratitude. \*

In solitudes I've ever loved to abide  
 By woods and streams, and shunn'd the evil-hearted,  
 Who from the path of heaven are foully parted,  
 Sweet Tuscany has been to me denied,  
 Whose sunny realms I would have gladly haunted,  
 Yet still the Sorgue his beauteous hills among  
 Has lent auxiliar murmurs to my song,  
 And echoed to the plaints my love has chanted.  
 Here triumph'd too the poet's hand that wrote  
 These lines—the power of love has witness'd this.  
 Delicious victory ! I know my bliss,  
 She knows it too—the saint on whom I doat.

Of Petrarch's poetry that is not amatory Ugo Foscolo says with justice, that his three political

\* Cercato ho sempre solitaria vita. — Sonnet 220, De Sade, vol. ii., p. 98.

canzoni, exquisite as they are in versification and style, do not breathe that enthusiasm which opened to Pindar's grasp all the wealth of imagination, all the treasures of historic lore and moral truth, to illustrate and dignify his strain. Yet the vigour, the arrangement, and the perspicuity of the ideas in these canzoni of Petrarch, the tone of conviction and melancholy in which the patriot upbraids and mourns over his country, strike the heart with such force, as to atone for the absence of grand and exuberant imagery, and of the irresistible impetus which peculiarly belongs to the ode. The exhaustion consequent on long continued civil feuds was now precipitating Italy into that state of inaction and dependence from which she has never risen. Petrarch saw no salvation but in the union of those few lofty spirits who love their country.

Fra magnanimi pochi a chi 'lben piace,  
Io vo gridando Pace Pace Pace.

But he found too few of those lofty spirits, and went about invoking peace in vain.

Petrarch's principal Italian poem that is not thrown into the shape of the sonnet is his *Trionfi*, or *Triumphs*, in five parts. Though not consisting

of sonnets, however, it has the same amatory and constant allusions to Laura as the greater part of his poetry. Here, as elsewhere, he recurs from time to time to the history of his passion, its rise, its progress, and its end. For this purpose he describes human life in its successive stages, omitting no opportunity of introducing his mistress and himself.

1. Man in his youthful state is the slave of love. 2. As he advances in age he feels the inconveniences of his amatory propensities, and endeavours to conquer them by chastity. 3. Amidst the victory which he obtains over himself, Death steps in, and levels alike the victor and the vanquished. 4. But Fame arrives after death, and makes man as it were live again after death, and survive it for ages by his fame. 5. But man even by fame cannot live for ever; if God has not granted him a happy existence throughout eternity. Thus Love triumphs over Man; Chastity triumphs over Love; Death triumphs over both; Fame triumphs over Death; Time triumphs over Fame; and Eternity triumphs over Time.

The subordinate parts and imagery of the *Trionfi* have a beauty rather arabesque than classical, and

resembling the florid tracery of the later oriental Gothic architecture. But the whole effect of the poem is pleasing from the general grandeur of its design.

In summing up Petrarch's character, moral, political, and poetical, I should not stint myself to the equivocal phrase used by Tacitus respecting Agricola: *Bonum Virum facile dixeris, magnum lubenter*, but should at once claim for his memory the title both of great and good. A restorer of ancient learning, a rescuer of its treasures from oblivion, a despiser of many contemporary superstitions, a man, who, though no reformer himself, certainly contributed to the reformation, (if Luther himself were to rise from the dead, and deny my latter position, I would not believe him) an Italian patriot who was above provincial partialities, a poet who still lives in the hearts of his country, and who is shielded from oblivion by more generations than there were hides in the seven-fold shield of Ajax — if this was not a great man, many who are so called must bear the title unworthily. He was a faithful friend, and a devoted lover, and appears to have been one of the most fascinating beings that ever existed. Even when his failings

were admitted, it must still be said that *even his failings leaned to virtue's side*, and, altogether, we may pronounce that

His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world "This was a man!"

# SONNETS OF PETRARCH,

TRANSLATED BY

T. H. SEALY AND SUSAN WOLLASTON.

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I HAVE been dissatisfied with the result of my own attempts at translating many of the Sonnets of Petrarch. My failure I attribute to having paid little attention to this species of poetry in the earlier part of my life. I should be sorry, however, that younger and better poets were discouraged from the task of transfusing the graces of the Petrarchan Muse into English. The difficulty is, no doubt, great ; but I hope that the following Sonnets, translated by my friend Mr. Sealy and Mrs. Wollaston, will show that in all cases it is not invincible.

T. C.

## SONNET IV.

"QUANTE FIATE AL MIO DOLCE RICETTO."

How oft and oft to these beloved bowers—  
Oh ! could I from myself ! from others flying,  
Bathing with tears my bosom and the flowers,  
I have wandered forth and filled the air with sighing !

How oft have sought out nooks where shadow lowers,  
My gloomier spirit to their gloom replying,  
Seeking in thought that bliss of former hours  
Which death hath stolen, and thence his power defying !\*

Now, like a nymph, or other form divine,  
That from the purest depth of Sarga's waters  
Rises and droops in beauty o'er the brink ;

Now I behold her where bright blooms entwine,  
Treading, Oh ! loveliest of earth's living daughters !  
Seeming, with sorrow, on my woes to think.

T. H. S.

## SONNET VI.

"GLI OCCHI, DI CHI'IO PARLAI SI CALDAMENTE."

The eyes I praised so warmly, and the face,  
And arms, and hands, and feet, whose beauty drew  
My spirit from myself at their sweet view,  
And made me strange among my fellow race ;

\* AND THENCE HIS POWER DEFYING—*ond 'io la chiamo spesso*:—  
whence I invoke him often.

Those crisped locks that shone with golden grace,  
 The angelic mirth that with enchanting glow  
 Was wont to make a paradise below,  
 Fill now, unconscious dust, their narrow space.

And yet I live ; Oh ! life too hardly borne !  
 Reft of the light I loved so well and long,  
 My weary bark in stormy waves is torn.

Be here an end of all my amorous song :  
 My vein of inspiration is outworn,  
 And nought around my lyre but notes of anguish throng.

T. H. S.

### SONNET XXV.

HE RELATES TO HIS FRIEND SENNUCCIO HIS UNHAPPINESS, AND THE VARIED MOOD OF LAURA.

Alas, Sennuccio ! would thy mind could frame  
 What now I suffer ! what my life's drear reign !  
 Consum'd beneath my heart's continued pain,  
 At will she guides me—yet am I the same.

Now humble—then doth pride her soul inflame,  
 Now harsh—then gentle—cruel—kind again—  
 Now all reserve—then borne on frolic's vein—  
 Disdain alternates with a milder claim.

Here once she sat, and there so sweetly sang ;  
 Here turn'd to look on me, and ling'ring stood ;  
 There first her beauteous eyes my spirit stole :



And here she smil'd, and there her accents rang,  
Her speaking face here told another mood.  
Thus Love, our sov'reign, holds me in control.

S. W.

## SONNET XXXIX.

HE PRAISES LAURA'S GRACEFUL BEARING, HAVING SEEN  
HER PASS ALONG THE BANKS OF THE SORGUE.

Love ! let us pause in contemplation blest  
Of her, our glory—Nature's freshest child !  
How sweetness pours on *her* its essence mild,  
For *her* heaven's light becomes an earthly guest.

With that, its brightest glow, art doth invest  
Her mortal shrine ; (what other so beguil'd ?)  
How soft her glance upon her dwelling mild,  
Its gentle slopes how light her foot hath prest !

The smiling herb—the many-tinted flower,  
Which round the frowning holm in clusters lie,  
There woo her touch, and court her fairy tread :

The heav'n's illumin'd by the wak'ning power  
Her glowing cheek emits, in that bright eye  
Exulting feel the rest its glances shed.

S. W.

## CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

OF

### PETRARCH'S LIFE,

ABRIDGED FROM BALDELLI.

A.D.

1304. He was born at Arezzo, the 20th of July (Epistol. de Reb. Senilibus, Lib. viii., Ep. 1).
1305. Is taken to Incisa at the age of seven months, where he remains seven years (Præfat. ad Fam. Epistolas).
1312. Is removed to Pisa, where he remains seven months (*Ibid*).
1313. Accompanies his parents to Avignon (*Ibid*).
1315. Goes to live at Carpentras (Epist. ad Posteritatem).
1319. Is sent to Montpelier.
1323. Is removed to Bologna.
1326. Returns to Avignon — loses his parents — contracts a friendship with James Colonna (Sen. Lib. xv., Ep. 1.)
1327. Falls in love with Laura.
1330. Goes to Lombes with James Colonna—forms acquaintance with Socrates and Lælius—and returns to Avignon to live in the house of Cardinal Colonna (Sen., Lib. x., Ep. 11).

A.D.

1331. Travels to Paris — travels through Flanders and Brabant, and visits a part of Germany.
1333. His first journey to Rome — his long navigation as far as the coast of England — his return to Avignon
1337. Birth of his son John — he retires to Vacluse (Carminum Lib. i., Ep. 12).
1339. Commences writing his epic poem, "*Africa*."
1340. Receives an invitation from Rome to come and be crowned as Laureate — and another invitation, to the same effect, from Paris.
1341. He goes to Naples, and thence to Rome, where he is crowned in the Capitol—repairs to Parma (Ed. Bas. Sen., Lib. v., Ep. 2) — death of Tommaso da Messina and James Colonna (Fam., Lib. iv., Ep. 12).
1342. Goes as orator of the Roman people to Clement VI. at Avignon (Ed. Bas., p. 904) — Studies the Greek language under Barlaamo (Tiraboschi, Vol. v).
1343. Birth of his daughter Francesca — He writes his dialogues *De secreto conflictu curarum suarum* (Ed. Bas., p. 398) — he is sent to Naples by Clement VI. and Cardinal Colonna — goes to Rome for a third and a fourth time (Sen., Lib. 10., Ep. 2) — returns from Naples to Parma (*Ibid*).
1344. Continues to reside in Parma (Ep. ad Post.)
1345. Leaves Parma, goes to Bologna, and thence to Verona—returns to Avignon (Fam., Lib. vi. Ep. 2).
1346. Continues to live at Avignon—is elected canon of Parma.

A.D.

1347. Revolution at Rome—Petrarch's connexion with the Tribune—takes his fifth journey to Italy (Fam., Lib. 7., Ep. 5 and 7)—repairs to Parma.
1348. Goes to Verona (Ep. ad Post.)—Death of Laura—he returns again to Parma—his autograph memorandum in the Milan copy of Virgil—visits Manfredi, Lord of Carpi, (Tiraboschi, Vol. v.) and James Carrara at Padua, (Ep. ad Post.)
1349. Goes from Parma to Mantua and Ferrara—returns to Padua, and receives, probably in this year, a canonicate in Padua (Epist. ad Post.)
1350. Is raised to the Archdeaconry of Parma—writes to the Emperor Charles IV. (Ed. Bas. p. 590)—goes to Rome, and, in going and returning, stops at Florence.
1351. Writes to Andrea Dandolo with a view to reconcile the Venetians and Florentines—the Florentines decree the restoration of his paternal property, and send John Boccaccio to recall him to his country—he returns, for the sixth time, to Avignon—is consulted by the four Cardinals, who had been deputed to reform the government of Rome.
1352. Writes to Clement VI. the letter which excites against him the enmity of the medical tribe—begins writing his treatise “De Vita Solitaria.”
1353. Visits his brother in the Carthusian monastery of Monte Rivo—writes his treatise “De Otio

A.D.

- Religiosorum—returns to Italy—takes up his abode with the Visconti—is sent by the Archbishop Visconti to Venice, to negotiate a peace between the Venetians and Genoese.
1354. Visits the Emperor at Mantua.
1355. His embassy to the Emperor—publishes his “Invective against a Physician.”
1360. His embassy to John, King of France.
1361. Leaves Milan and settles at Venice—gives his library to the Venetians.
1364. Writes for Luchino del Verme his “Treatise de Officio et Virtutibus Imperatoris.”
1366. Writes to Urban V. imploring him to remove the Papal residence to Rome—finishes his treatise “De Remediis utriusque fortunæ.”
1368. Quits Venice—four young Venetians, either in this year or the preceding, promulgated a critical judgment against Petrarch—repairs to Pavia to negotiate peace between the Pope’s Legate and the Visconti.
1370. Sets out to visit the Pontiff—is taken ill at Ferrara—retires to Arquà among the Euganean hills.
1371. Writes his “Invectiva Contra Gallum,” and his “Epistle to Posterity.”
1372. Writes for Francesco da Ferrara his essay “De Republica optime administranda.”
1373. Is sent to Venice by Francesco da Ferrara.
1374. Translates the *Griselda* of Boccaccio—dies on the 18th of July in the same year.





# DESCRIPTION OF THE COINS

RELATING TO

## THE AGE OF PETRARCH.

BY J. G. PFISTER,

MEMBER OF THE NUMISMATIC SOCIETY OF LONDON.

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JUST before I had finished writing the biography of Petrarch, I received a visit from a German gentleman, who has collected an immense number of the Coins of the middle ages, and who made me welcome to copy several of them relating to the age of Petrarch. I was glad to accept his offer: I have caused some of his Coins to be copied and engraved, and am further indebted to him for the remarks on their history, which shew him to be deeply acquainted with Numismatology.

In the history of any period of society, Coins are important things. They exhibit the state of art, and the contemporary value of money. The description of the Coins, which M. Pfister has had the goodness to add, will, I trust, give additional value to my humble volumes.

T. C.



## VOL. I., PAGE 34.

COIN OF THE EMPEROR HENRY VII. OF LUXEMBURG.

1308—1313.—No. I.

This fine and rare coin was struck at Milan, probably at the time of Henry's coronation, as king of Italy, in 1311. It exhibits the bearded figure of St. Ambrose, the patron saint of Milan, seated, in episcopal vestments, in the attitude of giving benediction. It is inscribed **MEDIOLANUM**. Reverse — a cross, and in each quarter a trefoil, with the inscription, **HENRICUS REX**.

This interesting coin I obtained in exchange from the learned Director of the Public Numismatic Cabinet of Milan, Signor Gaetano Cattaneo.

## VOL. I., PAGE 43.

GOLD FLORIN OF POPE JOHN XXII. 1316—1331.—No. II.

The type of this coin, struck for the first time at Avignon, in 1322, is imitated from the famous gold florin of Florence. It presents the bearded figure of St. John Baptist, with the halo around his head, his long hair floating down his shoulders, over which is a cloak, fastened on the chest by a button. He is represented in the attitude of preaching, having the right hand raised to give the benediction in the Greek manner, which is, by holding out at full length the fore-finger and little finger, and pressing the two middle fingers against the thumb. In the left hand he is holding a staff surmounted by a cross; on the right, in the field, we observe the papal mitre. The legend is **S** (anctus) **JOHANNES. B.** (atista), the name of the saint, answer-

ing at the same time for that of the pope. Reverse—the lily of Florence; on the left, in the field, are seen the papal cross-keys, and the inscription is: **SANT. PETRN** (*Sanctus Petrus*).

For this rare gold coin I am under obligation to M. Requier, the zealous and obliging director of the public museum at Avignon, of whom I obtained it last year in exchange. M. Requier had also the liberality to send by me a fine and very rare Denar of Carloman (son of Charlemagne), found at Avignon, as a present for the cabinet of the Numismatic Society of London.\*

#### VOL. I., PAGE 100.

RARE COIN OF WALRAM, ARCHBISHOP AND ELECTOR OF COLOGNE. 1331—1349.—No. III.

In a gothic ornament with seven arches is exhibited the mitred bust of the archbishop, having upon his breast a small shield, bearing the arms of the archbishopric, a cross sable in a field argent. Inscribed, after a croslet, **WALRAM ARCHIEPCS** (*Archiepiscopus*) **COLONIE**: (*nsis*.)

Reverse—In the field, a cross, and two circles with inscriptions; the outer circle has **XPC. VICIT. XPC. REGNAT. XPC. IMPAT.** (*Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.*) The inner circle indicates the place where the coin was struck, **MONETA TUYCIEN** (*sis*), which is the ancient small town of Deutz, opposite to Cologne. Deutz, Duitz, Tuitum, derives its name from a king of the Germans, Teus, or Tuisko;

\* See the Numismatic Journal, Vol. I. (April, No. 4, Article xxviii.) London, 1837.

according to others, from Duytsch, signifying German. It is said that Hercules had a temple at this place ; and that the great defeat of the Saxons happened here in 376.

At page 100, we read that Petrarch, during his journey, was received with extraordinary demonstrations of respect at most places, and particularly at Cologne, and that he was agreeably surprised to find that his reputation had gained him the esteem of several inhabitants. Poetry, at this period, that is to say from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, was, I believe, in its highest state of cultivation in the countries bordering on the Rhine, especially in such large cities as Cologne and Mentz, the latter of which was most famous for its Troubadours.

Petrarch, not understanding the language, could not appreciate its poetry. I need here name only Hartmann von der Au (Swain), Konrad von Würtzburg (*Der Nibelungen Lied*, the German *Odyssee*), Wolfram von Eschenbach (*Parcival*, &c.) But Germany had also its Petrarch, for who has not heard of the Minnesänger Heinrich Frauenlob, who did not, like Petrarch, confine his praise to one lady. His strains were devoted to many a fair one at Mentz ; and he was so much esteemed and beloved by them, that, at his death, his remains were borne to the grave by females. In the cloisters of the cathedral of Mentz, his monument represents the singular occurrence just stated. At my last visit to those cloisters, I learned with pleasure that the monument is to undergo a thorough repair, having been much damaged during the invasion of the French.

As a sincere admirer of Petrarch, far be it from me to underrate in any respect his far-famed and just reputation ; but for the "*Tedesca rabbia*" I have a little account to settle with him.

Had Petrarch been at Cologne in his more advanced age, he might truly have said that his reputation had procured him the acquaintance and favour of several inhabitants of Cologne. "*Ibi amicos prius mihi fama pepererat quam meritum.*" Now, I would ask, in what consisted his merit at that time? He was about the age of twenty-seven when at Cologne. "*Mihi fama !*"—what fame? No doubt he was a brilliant star in the select societies of the splendid papal court at Avignon, admired for his fine figure, his learning, his ready wit, and, above all, his beautiful sonnets on his lady-love. In all this, however, I see no such merit or fame as could reach from Avignon to the banks of the Rhine. Petrarch had not then shone as a diplomatist, in which character he afterwards distinguished himself so often for his patriotism, and in which, above all, he so frequently displayed his goodness of heart and nobleness of mind. Besides, the courts of the archbishops of Cologne, Mentz, and Treves, who were temporal as well as ecclesiastical princes, were not less splendid than that of the popes at Avignon. They attracted also men eminent in every branch of science to their capitals. It is certain that the fine arts, for instance, flourished less at Avignon than at Cologne. Its cathedral, though yet unfinished, stands unrivalled in Europe ; and the coins of its archbishops are far superior in design to those of any one of the popes ever executed at Avignon.

I believe, therefore, that the name of Petrarch had scarcely reached Cologne, and that it was known there, merely from a letter, but a few weeks perhaps before his visit. But let us forgive his vanity; I do not think that he wished to deceive others—he only deceived himself. Petrarch, a favourite of Pope John XXII., was, perhaps, not aware that Walram, archbishop of Cologne, was one of the most intimate friends of that pontiff; they had been fellow students, and, I dare say, had many frolics together; and it was Pope John XXII. to whom Walram was indebted for the archbishopric. This prelate had previously been provost at Liege, and was the son of the powerful Count Gerhard of Juliers, and brother of the reigning Duke William (*qui primus Marchio et Dux Juliacensis creatus fuit\**). This will no doubt be sufficient to explain why Petrarch was made so much of at Liege, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Cologne; and he might well say that he was agreeably surprised at such a favourable reception.

VOL. I., PAGE 184.

COIN OF THE SENATE AND PEOPLE OF ROME, CURRENT IN THE TIME OF COLA DI RIENZO.—No. IV.

*Roma Caput Mundi.* The crowned Roma, seated, full-faced, holding in her right hand a globe, and in her left a palm branch, indicating that Rome is giving peace to the world.

*Roma caput mundi, regit orbis frena rotundi.*

It is curious to observe on this coin that the female figure representing Rome still exhibits the Byzantine design,

\* Hartzheim, *Historia Rei Nummariae Coloniensis.*, cap. 18. (Coloniae, 1754.)

while, in the legend, the letter M of the word *Mundi* already shows the gradual transition from the Latin to the Gothic.

Reverse—After a croslet, *SENATUS. P. Q. R.* (*Senatus Populusque Romanus.*) In the field is represented a lion, which I take to be the Bavarian, the lion of the very ancient house of Welf (the Guelphs), Counts of Altorf, who, so early as the eleventh century, became dukes of Bavaria. The Welfs went over to the papal party in 1076; and, in 1089, Welf I., duke of Bavaria, married his son to the famous Countess Matilda. At this period originated the two great rival factions, so destructive to Italy and Germany—the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. Muratori mentions, among other distinguished Guelphs settled at that early period in Lombardy, and related to the house of Este, “Azzo Marchio de Longobardia, pater Welphonis, Ducis de Bojoaria.” In those days we find Rome sometimes named the Leonine city: hence the golden lion in a field azure was the device of the Guelphs, and a black eagle in a red one that of the Ghibellines.

Several of these coins were found at Viterbo, and came into my possession. They must be scarce, for, only three years ago, neither the Imperial Cabinet of Vienna nor the British Museum possessed any specimen. To the cabinet at Vienna I gave one in exchange for a scarce Milanese coin, and to the British Museum I presented another.

VOL. I., PAGE 191.

MEDALLION OF LAURA.

The unique and unpublished medallion here represented exhibits the portrait of Petrarch's beloved Laura,

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C C

at the age of twenty-seven — a sweet and modest countenance, rather inclined to tenderness, indeed as graceful and winning as that of Mary Stuart before she was fated to experience the pangs of love and sorrow.

*“Mon pâle visage de violet teint qui est l'amoureux teint.”*

The obverse of this medallion bears this inscription : LAURA ROYES SPONSA CUM UGONE DI SADE, and on the reverse is the following : FRANCISCUS PETRARCHA AMIRATOR VIRTUS ET SAPIENTIAE SUAE.

But, to describe Laura's portrait in words, we must summon Petrarch himself. When he met her for the first time in the church of the monastery of St. Clair, she was dressed in green, and her gown was embroidered with violets. Her face, her air, her gait, were to him superhuman. Her person was delicate, her eyes were tender and sparkling, and her eyebrows black as ebony. Golden locks waved over her shoulders, whiter than snow, and the ringlets were interwoven by the fingers of Love.

*“ Erano i capei d'oro all'aura sparsi,  
Che in mille dolci nodi gli avvolgea ;  
E il vago lume oltre misura ardea  
Di que' begli occhi,” &c.*

Her neck was well formed, and her complexion animated by the tints of nature — *“ E il viso di pietosi color.”* When she opened her mouth you perceived the beauty of pearls and the sweetness of roses. She was full of grace. Nothing was so soft as her looks, so modest as her carriage, so touching as the sound of her voice. An air of gaiety and tenderness breathed around her, but so pure and happily tempered as to inspire every beholder with the sentiments of virtue, for she was chaste as the

dew-drop of the morn. Such, says Petrarch, was the amiable Laura.

After such a description, we may easily suppose that he did his utmost to secure her esteem and affection; and we may also judge how he suffered from the cold reception which he often met with. To console himself, he thought it enough that he was so blest as to have beheld her on earth.

Se fu beato chi la vide in terra,  
Or che sia dunque a rivederla in cielo!

This is not the place for entering into a discussion concerning the period when, after the general revival of the fine arts in Italy, that of executing medals began to be practised: suffice it to observe, that there is no doubt that medals existed so early as the fourteenth century.

My opinion can scarcely be considered too extravagant, if I assume the possibility that this medal might be the work of an eminent artist, and an intimate friend of Petrarch's, resident at that period in Avignon, named Simone Martini of Sienna.

Benedict XII. drew to Avignon the best artists to assist in raising that enormous edifice, which he had planned for himself and his successors. Painting had already begun to revive; Giotto, a pupil of Cimabue's (who raised this art from its ashes) had left after his death (1336) a pupil who followed his style of painting, and who had worked with him in Rome at the famous mosaic picture, representing the bark of St. Peter tossed by the tempest. This pupil's name was Simone Martini, sometimes called Simone de Sienna.



He attached himself to his master, and followed him to Rome, where he produced some pictures that established his reputation. He worked afterwards, practised his art with success in Tuscany, still in the manner of Giotto. Benedict XII. invited him in a very pressing manner, says Vasari, to Avignon. He intended to have the history of the martyrs painted by him to adorn his palace. Simone possessed invention, and succeeded admirably in portraits. When he came to Avignon, his behaviour gained him the love and esteem of all the prelates, and he soon became acquainted with Petrarch. He loved his countrymen, and, above all, men of genius, and he conceived a sincere attachment to the Tuscan poet: a certain affinity which subsists between poetry and painting contributed to strengthen the bond of their union. Simone held the same rank among the painters as Petrarch among the poets of his time. He expressed to Simone his wish to possess a small picture of Laura, so small that he could carry it about him, probably for his first journey to Italy, (page 158). Simone delighted to exercise his talents on so celebrated a beauty, and gave Petrarch this mark of his friendship with the greatest readiness. This happened in 1335: Laura, born in 1308, would, therefore, be represented on our medallion at the age of twenty-seven.

Whether the imagination of Simone was so filled with Laura's image that it was ever present when he purposed to paint a beautiful woman, or whether he meant to gratify Petrarch by doing this homage to his passion, so much is certain, that he drew her figure on many occasions in which she had no concern. On a

painting in fresco, she is dressed in green at the feet of St. George on horseback, who delivers her from the Dragon.

This piece is under the portico of Notre Dame at Avignon. Laura is introduced in another of his pictures, in the church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence. Among the females who represent the pleasures of the world, we again see Laura dressed in green, with a little flame rising out of her bosom, and her gown sprinkled with flowers.

Ove le belle membra  
Pose colei che sola a me par Donna,

says Petrarch, who is standing by a knight of Rhodes. At Sienna also is shown a picture of the Virgin, painted by Simone, which is a portrait of Laura.

Simone was a sculptor as well as a painter: he copied in marble those pictures of the lovers in Santa Maria Novella, (page 191). Now the process of making medallions adopted by the Italian artists at this early period, was first to model in wax the portrait to be represented; after that model a mould was made, and from the mould the medal was cast. The material generally employed in those days was lead, purified and mixed with tin, which rendered it fitter to fill the mould during the effusion. (In the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth centuries, when artists were already more in the habit of using gold, silver, and copper, or bronze, for casting medals, they occasionally touched up such medals with the chisel.) A similar process seems to have been employed in the well-known papal bulls; the seal being less perishable in lead than in wax. We have ample proof that me-

dallions were mostly executed in those days by painters, from those inscribed *Opus Pisani Pictoris*, down to the monogram of Albrecht Dürer.

May it not, therefore, be very likely that Simone tried his skill also in that interesting and elegant branch of art? Surely the task would be an easy one for him to accomplish, particularly as he must have had opportunity enough to observe the papal bulls on which the effigy of St. Peter is often very well represented. I have only to add that, if our medallion does not belong to the period referred to, it is, certainly, not a work of yesterday. I bought the medallion many years ago at Milan of a dealer in old iron, old clothes, glass bottles, and the like. At the time of purchase, it was in such a condition that a few letters only were to be perceived, enough, however, to awaken my curiosity to know what it might be. So I paid the five sous demanded for it, and, after a careful cleaning, the medallion appeared in the state represented in the fac-simile herewith given.

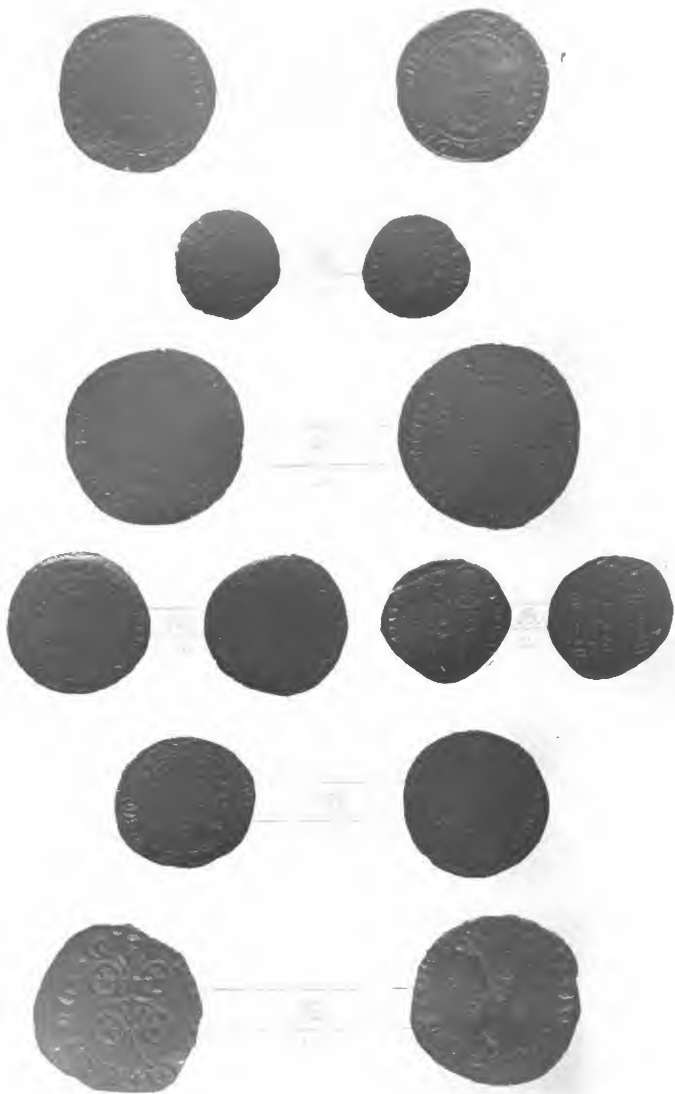
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PAPAL BULL OF BENEDICT XII. 1334—1342.—No. V.

This unpublished bull, from the county of Venaissin, may be safely attributed from its fine workmanship to Benedict XII. After a croslet inscribed *SIGILUM DOMINI PAPE*, the field exhibits the bust of St. Peter, done in the best manner of that period.

Reverse — after a croslet *DNI. (Domini) COMITATI VENASINI*, (on his silver coins *Comes Venasini*) and in the field the papal cross-keys. This bull is also a duplicate from the Museum at Avignon, and I publish it as a fine specimen for showing that our medallion





of Laura might, indeed, be a production of the time of Petrarch's sojourn at Avignon.

VOL. I., PAGE 200.

COIN OF ROBERT OF ANJOU, KING OF NAPLES.

1309—1343.—No. VIII.

The king appears crowned, and seated on a throne, which is supported by two lions. He is holding in the right hand a sceptre, which terminates in a fleur de lis, and in the left the orb surmounted by a cross. Inscribed after a croslet ROBERT. DI : GRA: IERL' ET SICIL' REX. (Robertus Dei gratia Jerusalem et Siciliae Rex.)

Reverse—an ornamented cross, having in each quarter a fleur de lis, inscribed COMES. PVINCIE. (Provinciae—of Pro, et Victa) ET. FORCALQUERII. \*

VOL. I., PAGE 211.

MEDALLION REPRESENTING THE PORTRAIT OF  
PETRARCH.

The laurelled bust of the immortal poet, wrapped in what appears to be the monastic habit usually worn by philosophers and other eminent men of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, (page 212). The bust seems to me to be placed on a body of water; as if the artist meant to express that the memory of Petrarch could never sink into the waters of oblivion. The medallion is inscribed D. Franciscus Petrarcha. The letter D. is, probably, intended for the word Divus, †

\* Forcalquier, a town not very far from Avignon.

† I am disposed to differ from the ingenious writer, and to consider the D. prefixed to the poet's name as standing for Dominus, a title still retained by the French in the abbreviated form of Dom, and given to the clergy of a certain rank, such as canons, &c. T. C.

which can here merely signify most excellent: it was given in those days, not only to most virtuous persons, but also to those of extraordinary qualities or talents.\*

From the appearance of the gilding, and the substance of the lead, resembling that of which most ancient medals and the papal bulls in the middle ages are composed, I am of opinion that this medallion may be contemporary with his coronation in the Capitol on the 8th of April, 1341. Petrarch was born July 20, 1304: the medallion, therefore, represents him at the age of thirty-seven. The countenance appears to express much of contemplation and resignation: "his Laura was far from him!" "This laurel," says he, "without adding any thing to my knowledge, has increased my own discontent, and the envy of others."

I bought this interesting object some years ago at Rome, of the eminent dealer and antiquary Vescovali.

VOL. I., PAGE 223.

COIN OF POPE BENEDICT XII. 1334—1342.—No. VI.

Zu Avignon ward er begraben,  
Doch weisz man jetzt nicht mehr  
Wo ihn die Winde haben.

So he at Avignon was buried;  
But with his dust there's now no saying  
What pranks the wanton winds are playing.†

The figure of the pope, seated and dressed in pontifical vestments, the right hand raised in the act of im-

\* See the Numismatic Journal, Vol. I., (No. 3, January) 1837, page 200, and, also, Proceedings of the Numismatic Society of London, 1838-39, page 304, 305.

† During the revolution the sepulchres of the popes and other eminent ecclesiastics were destroyed, and their ashes scattered in the wind.

parting benediction, and holding in the left a crosier, inscribed BENEDICTUS.

Reverse—in the field a cross, and inscribed P. P., (papa) DUODECIMO.

I bought this scarce coin at Loretto.

VOL. I., PAGE 229.

PAPAL BULL FROM THE CITY OF AVIGNON.—No. VII.

Nido di tradimenti, in cui si cova  
Quanto mal per lo mondo oggi si spande;  
Di vin serva, di letti, e di viaude,  
In cui lussuria fa l'ultima prova.

PETRARCHA.

In this unpublished specimen is exhibited the papal mitre triply crowned, after a croslet inscribed BULLA CURIE DNI NRI. (Domini nostri) Pape.

Reverse. The papal cross-keys: DNI: CIVITATIS AVINIONENSIS. This bull, when I compare it with the coins of Pope John XXIII., and particularly the design of the mitre, &c., I am inclined to attribute to that pontiff. It cannot be given to any pope before Benedict XII., because the papal mitre is represented triply crowned; and the first instance of exhibiting the tiara *triplici corona* occurred in 1336, under Benedict XII. The early mitre of the popes was but a round cap, encircled by a plain crown, or rim, as we may observe very distinctly on the papal coins of the ninth century. This form was preserved until 1130. But, in the time of Boniface VIII., 1294, a second crown was added to the mitre, and, in 1336, a third, under Benedict XII.

This bull is also from the museum of Avignon.



## VOL. I., PAGE 357.

COIN (GROSSO AMBROSINO) OF LUCHINO AND THE  
ARCHBISHOP GIOVANNI VISCONTI, STRUCK  
BETWEEN 1339—1349.—No. IX.

A helmet ornamented with two wings, and a dragon's head swallowing a man; a small shield bearing the Visconti serpent, and inscribed after a croslet LUCHINUS VICECOES MEDIOLANUM.

Reverse. The bearded figure of St. Ambrose, seated and dressed in episcopal vestments, having the right hand raised to give benediction, and the left holding a crosier. S. AMBROSIUS. JOHS : VICECOS (Johannes Vicecomes.)

After the death of Azzo (17th August, 1339), the great civic council of Milan placed John, Bishop of Novara, and Luchino, uncle of Azzo, at the head of government. About that time there must have existed in Milan a fine marble statue of St. Ambrose, not resembling our grim saint on the coin. Petrarch was never weary of contemplating this figure. "It was a most agreeable object," says he. "This great archbishop appeared to be giving me his blessing. What majesty in his countenance! What kindness and expression in his eyes! This sight diffused through my heart a sweet and inexpressible tranquillity. I rejoiced that I had come to Milan."

## VOL. II., PAGE 66.

COIN (CARRARINI) OF JAMES DE CARRARA.—1345—1350.  
No. X.

Versus conorum Patavi sunt hic Dominorum,  
Quos genuit clara soboles Carraria rara.

An ornamental cross extending to the edge of the coin; in the first and second quarters two ornamented

letters I. A., for Jacobus ; the other two quarters represent the arms of the house of Carrara, which is the frame of a carriage with four wheels, gules, in a field argent, inscribed CIVIT : *as* PAD : *ua*.

Reverse. *Sanctus* PSDOCIMVS. (Prosdocimus) one of the patron saints of Padua, seated and dressed in episcopal vestments, holding in the right hand the city of Padua, and in the left a crosier. The letter P. to the left is supposed by Argelati to be intended for Padua ; it seems to me, however, more likely to signify Protector. St. Prosdocimo, being the first bishop of Padua, was chosen by the citizens as protector of their town ; he was a Greek, and lived at Antioch. In the time of St. Peter he became a christian, and went with that apostle to Rome, where he was consecrated bishop of Padua, Vicenza, and other neighbouring towns. In all those places he spread the christian religion. He superintended the bishopric upwards of 90 years, and died at Padua at the advanced age of 114, in the year of our Lord 141, 7th November (Portenari Storia di Padua.)

James de Carrara was assassinated by his natural son William, 19th December, 1350. On that event Petrarch wrote the following letter to Boccaccio. "I have learned, by long habit, to cope with fortune. I do not oppose her strokes by groans and tears, but by a heart hardened to repel them. She perceived me firm and intrepid, and took a lance to pierce me at the time I was most exposed by the death of those friends who had formed a rampart around me. By a sudden, horrible, and unworthy death she has deprived me of another tender friend ; of a man who was my consolation and glory. He was the most like King Robert in his love of letters, and in his favours to those who professed them. He was distinguished for a

singular gentleness of manners, and was the father, rather than the lord, of his people. I had given myself to him. While I live, I shall never lose the remembrance of James de Carrara, and I shall always speak of him with pleasure. I would celebrate him to you and to posterity; but he is much above my praise."

## VOL. II. PAGE 74.

COIN OF ANDREA DANDOLO, DOGE OF VENICE—1342—1354.

No. XI.

This coin is called Matapan, and received its name from the Cape Matapan, where it was first struck by order of Enrico Dandolo, during the fourth crusade, 1203. The type is Byzantine. It bears the full-faced figures of the Doge and St. Mark, standing; the Doge, to the right, is receiving from the patron saint the sacred standard, inscribed *ANDR: DANDULO DUX*. The saint is holding a book *S. M. VENETI: (Sanctus Marcus Veneticus.)*

Reverse. The figure of Christ seated and holding the Gospel, *IC. XC. (Jesus Christus.)*

## VOL. II., PAGE 145.

COIN OF BARNABO AND GALEAZZO VISCONTI.

STRUCK 1354—1365.—No. XII.

The serpent of the Visconti with a man in its jaws. It is related that in the year 400 a pestiferous dragon existed in the neighbourhood of Milan, which carried destruction among the inhabitants, and was, at last, killed by an Uberto Visconti, when the city was restored to its former tranquillity. The letters *B. G.*, on each side of the serpent, are for Barnabo and Galeazzo, all in an ornament of four arches, with a rose in each of its angles, and inscribed after a croslet *BERNABOS ET GALEAZ VICECOMITES*.

Reverse. The patron saint of Milan seated and holding in his right hand a scourge. S. AMBROSIUS MEDIOLANU :

Barnabo was one of the nephews of the great John Visconti, Archbishop and Lord of Milan. Barnabo was cruel, and his reign was marked by nothing but war and slaughter. He married the daughter of Martin de Lescale, who was called the queen, from the lofty airs which she assumed and her love of pomp and pageantry. In the same year (1354), she presented her husband with a boy, and did Petrarch the honour to choose him for his godfather. He called him Mark, gave him a gold cup, and composed a Latin poem on the occasion. In 1368, Galeazzo, the brother of Barnabo, sent for Petrarch to desire him to negotiate a peace with the pope, to whom the conduct of Barnabo gave great displeasure, and who, in conjunction with many of the great lords, had resolved to exterminate the Visconti.

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MOUTON D'OR OF KING JOHN OF FRANCE.—1350—1364.

No. XIII.

In a Gothic ornament is represented the Agnus Dei, with the king's name JOH : REX., and AGNUS DEI QUI TOLLIS PECCATA MUNDI MISERERE NOBIS.

Reverse. Within a compartment of double moulding of four arches, an ornamental cross, having, in each quarter, a fleur de lis (XPC.) CHRISTUS VINCIT, CHRISTUS REGNAT, CHRISTUS IMPERAT.

Galeazzo took advantage of the embarrassed situation of king John of France, who had to pay to the English 3,000,000 gold moutons for his ransom ; a circumstance with which Villani was probably unacquainted.

## VOL. II., PAGE 235.

COPPER COIN OF FRANCIS DE CARRARA, SURNAMED  
THE OLD—1356—1388 —No. XIV.

Here we have again the carriage of the Carraresi, with the inscription FRANCISCUS D. CARARIA.

Reverse. A winged helmet, with the horned Moor's head, drapery, and the letter F. on each side, SEPTIMUS DUX PADUA. In 1388, no longer able to resist the united forces of Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti and the Venetians, and, not being much beloved by the people of Padua, he renounced the sovereignty and retired to Treviso ; but, being pursued by his enemies, he was obliged to retreat from that place, and was at last taken and imprisoned at Monza, where he died miserably.

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